DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 895 RC 020 652

TITLE	The Hispanic Child.
INSTITUTION	Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	96
CONTRACT	RJ96006501
NOTE	45p.; Photographs and illustrations will not reproduce adequately.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Northwest Education; v1 n1 Win 1996
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Bilingual Education; Bilingual Students; Bilingual Teachers; *Cultural Differences; Culturally Relevant Education; Educational Change; Educational Experience; Educational Needs; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Hispanic Americans; Immigrants; Limited English Speaking; *Mexican American Education; *Migrant Children; Parent Participation; Preschool Education; Teacher Education Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Hispanic American Students; Mexico United States Border; *United States (Northwest)

ABSTRACT

This theme issue focuses on issues related to the education of Hispanic Americans. Articles cover educational strategies that address the linguistic and cultural differences of Hispanic Americans, issues related to migrant children and their education, the educational experiences of Hispanic American children, bilingual teacher education programs, expectations of Hispanic American parents regarding education, systemic school reform, and innovative school programs in the Northwest aimed at improving the education of Hispanic Americans. Articles include: (1) "Field of Dreams" (Lee Sherman Caudell); (2) "Two Worlds in One Classroom" (Tony Kneidek); (3) "Citizens of the World: A Rural Oregon District Helps Hispanic Families Settle into the Community" (Lee Sherman Caudell); (4) "Great Expectations" (Lee Sherman Caudell); (5) "Families First: A Willamette Valley Preschool Program Strengthens Parents' Role in Children's Education" (Melissa Steineger); (6) "Growing Teachers: A Washington College Builds a Bilingual Teaching Force" (Matthew Fleagle); and (7) "High Sights: Linking LEP Programs to Systemic Reform Helps Ensure Inclusion" (Lee Sherman Caudell). The journal also reviews publications related to Hispanic Americans, synthesizes research on bilingual education, overviews educational strategies for limited-English-proficient students, lists organizations that provide assistance in designing programs for language-minority students, and presents strategies for increasing parental involvement in education. (LP)

NW

ED 396 895

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

The Hispanic Child

RC020652

NW

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1

WINTER 1986

THIS ISSUE

The Hispanic Child

2

8

14

18

26

29

36

DEPARTMENTS:

31

32

40

COVER PHOTO: GRISELA PELAYO, A FOURTH-GRADER AT GATES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN OREGON'S SANTIAM CANYON SCHOOL DISTRICT. PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAY REITER OF SALEM, OREGON.

The Hispanic Child

IN THE MIDST OF THE NATIONAL DEBATE ON IMMIGRATION, BILINGUAL EDUCATION, AND "OFFICIAL" ENGLISH, SCHOOLS LOOK FOR EFFECTIVE WAYS TO TEACH HISPANIC STUDENTS

cross America, citizens debate immigration. It's an old question and a big one. It's about who we are as a nation and what we want to become.

Hispanics, most of them from Mexico, are among the largest immigrant groups. They come looking for work and better lives. Many of them come to harvest the produce of the land: apples and strawberries, lettuce and peppers, cotton and potatoes. Many stay, not only for jobs, but for the education U.S. schools can give their children.

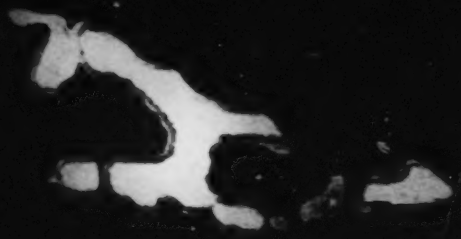
The anti-immigration voices are calling for building walls at the border, for sending in the troops, for locking kids out of schools. They are calling for making English the official and only language of government.

Those who argue the opposing view say we have been a nation of immigrants since the Pilgrims met the Wampanoag tribe in the land we now know as Massachusetts. They say our strength lies in the many colors of our ethnic palette. They say, "Let us honor and embrace diversity."

In communities divided on who belongs, schools struggle to educate children whose first language is not English. Under the Constitution, no child can be turned away from the classroom. But it's not enough to let the child sit at a desk, left on her own to make it or fail. Schools, the courts have ruled, must take steps to help the language-minority child grasp the lesson and understand the language.

In these pages, you will meet teachers and administrators who are reaching across the cultural and linguistic divide to educate the newcomers. You will meet a former farmworker who wants her children to study law, medicine, and architecture. You will follow a recent immigrant through her day as a ninth-grader at a school that sets high standards for all and accepts excuses from none. You will look in on a first-grader who writes to Santa in two languages—just to be certain he gets his Super Nintendo.

You will find a synthesis of the research on bilingual education. A discussion on systemic reform. A look inside Northwest schools that are innovating. And ideas about what works.



Fields of Dreams

From their home in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, the Rosalez family began following the crops when David was six: Cotton in Texas. Pears in California. Potatoes and peppermint in Oregon. Asparagus, beets, and grapes in Washington. The family would pile into the pickup, Mom and Dad in the cab, the three kids propped on the luggage under a wooden canopy. Day and night, sometimes for three or four days at a stretch, the wheels rolled relentlessly along the highway. The family ate meals of homemade burritos or store-bought salami and bread. To fill the long hours, the kids sang Mexican songs in their loudest voices. Or they slept. Or they stared out the window, watching 2,000 miles of America pass by.

When the Rosalez children reached their teens, the family settled down. They lived on their savings in the winter when the fields lay fallow. "Even though my mom was illiterate, with no education in Spanish or English, she was *excellent* at budgeting," longtime Oregon educator David Rosalez recalls. "My parents were so proud of the fact that they never had to go on food subsidies or welfare."

The family left the migrant stream, Rosalez says, so that he and his brother and sister could earn their diplomas. "That," he says, "is an indication of how very much our parents cared about what kind of education we received. People say migrant parents don't care. They *do* care. They have dreams for their kids."

When the family started wintering in Central Oregon in the mid-1960s, they were among a handful of families who had settled in the Madras, Metolius, Culver area, he says. Today, the Jefferson County School District enrolls 550 Hispanic students—almost 20 percent of its student body.

Like Jefferson, rural districts all over the Northwest have seen their Hispanic enrollments double and triple in the past decade as families like the Rosalezes settle near the fields that drew them there. In Oregon, for instance, the number of Hispanic students in public schools increased more than 60 percent in the decade between 1974 and 1984—from 8,000 to 13,000. By 1994, nearly 33,000 Hispanic students were in Oregon classrooms.

Washington has seen the same quantum growth in its Hispanic population. The orchards of Central Washington's river valleys, which produce 60 percent of the nation's apples, have drawn thousands of Hispanic farmworkers over the years. Some have bought orchards and become growers, just as Midwestern migrants fleeing the Dust Bowl did in the 1930s, says Jim Thomas of the Washington State Apple Commission. "Most of today's growers came as pickers during the Great Depression," Thomas says. "The cycle continues. This is a very labor-intensive industry. The opportunities are there for anyone who is willing to work hard."

Patricia Sandoval, a kindergartner at Gates Elementary School in Oregon's Santiam Canyon School District, gets bilingual instruction in a multiage classroom. Photo by Jay Reiter.

Today, Oregon's Hispanic student enrollment tops 6 percent of total enrollment—a bigger proportion than any other ethnic minority group. In Idaho and

Washington the picture is similar, with Hispanic enrollment exceeding 7 percent.

The Northwest trend reflects a pattern across America, where Hispanics make up the fastest-growing minority group. The growth accelerated in 1986, when Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act. The new law allowed longtime seasonal farmworkers to apply for legal residency.

"The act was a definite watermark," says Gloria Muñiz of the Oregon Department of Education. "When they became legal, they were no longer tied to being migrant. They were no longer part of an underground economy, being used by growers to harvest crops with little regard for legality and little opportunity to settle out, put down roots, and raise a family."

In Oregon alone, 30,000 laborers applied for seasonal agricultural worker status during the 18 months after passage of the act, says David Beebe of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. About 70 percent of those applications were approved.

"There was a tendency, when they settled in a community, for other people from the village they came from to join them," says Muñiz. "For instance, Mill City had very few Hispanic students, and then they woke up one year and they had 10, and then the next year they had 20, and then 30. Now, there's a little community beginning." (See article, Page 14.)

Among Mill City's recent Hispanic arrivals are Maria Martinez and her husband. Five years ago, they abandoned their lettuce-cutting jobs in California to join a relative in the Santiam Canyon's timbered hills. Martinez splits her working hours between the classroom, where she's a bilingual aide, and the Mexican restaurant she runs with her husband. The couple came north, she says, to give wider horizons to their three children. She hopes to see them pursue careers in law, architecture, and medicine. "I want them to be something," she says. "That's the reason we are working so hard, for them to have a good future—so we can have the financial means to send them all to college. They're *going* to go to college."

Towns like Mill City—and, by extension, the rural schools that serve them—have felt the impact of the Hispanic influx most strongly. Urban Hispanic populations are growing fast, too. But in contrast to Asian and Black students, who typically attend inner-city and urban-fringe schools, Hispanics tend to cluster in outlying areas, particularly in small towns, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. And while city schools usually enroll a broad cross section of ethnic groups, country schools traditionally have been less mixed. "Small rural towns throughout the country are grappling with an influx of Hispanic...immigrants who have followed jobs to these traditionally homogeneous settings," ***Education Week*** noted in January 1995.

Children with recent roots in Mexico or other Latin American countries often come to Northwest schools speaking only Spanish. Others speak indigenous languages such as Mixtec. Northwest schools' responses to the newcomers differ as widely as Oregon's wet Willamette Valley differs from its dry high desert. Some turn away Spanish-speaking kids who have no address but the family truck.

"We have principals who don't want to serve these kids," says Merced Flores of the Oregon Department of Education. "They say they are not citizens of this country. Some principals are not cognizant of the laws, and in some cases they refuse to know what the law is."

Migrant children in Idaho, too, have been spurned at the schoolhouse door, says Anita Brunner of the Idaho Department of Education. "We get reports of older kids going into high school and being told, 'You've come in too late. You're not going to get credit for this semester, so why bother at all?'" she

says. "It's a nightmare, and you can hardly believe that any educator or front-office person would say that kind of thing. But apparently it still goes on."

Refusing to admit undocumented children violates a 1982 landmark Supreme Court decision, *Plyler vs. Doe*. The justices ruled that K-12 schools cannot deny admission to children because of their immigration status. Making sure that language-minority students—U.S. citizens and noncitizens alike—have meaningful access to education is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The OCR recently stepped up its enforcement of "Lau" cases—shorthand for *Lau vs. Nichols*, the unanimous 1974 Supreme Court decision saying schools must take steps to ensure that language-minority students can comprehend instruction. In the three years between 1991 and 1994, the OCR's Northwest office handled 21 language-minority equity cases—an average of seven per year. Then, in the 1994-95 school year alone, the office opened 12 cases in the region—three investigations based on complaints and nine compliance reviews initiated by the OCR, according to Patricia Yates of the OCR.

Several districts agreed to correct the problems before the investigation began. Others were found in violation of students' civil rights. At one rural Northwest district, for instance, a citizen complained when a bilingual program for Hispanic students was cancelled. The civil rights office looked into the allegations. It found that 90 percent of the limited-English-proficient students whose files it reviewed were getting Ds or Fs in their academic courses, or they were one to eight years below grade level in academic achievement. One teacher with no training in English as a Second Language (ESL) methods was teaching ESL classes.

In another district, the OCR found that three of the four high school teachers interviewed were unaware that students enrolled in their classes spoke little or no English. Six of those students got Ds or Fs in those teachers' classes. The investigation also found that ESL services were reduced during the 1993-94 school year because the number of language-minority students—and, hence, the ESL teacher's class load—had increased. The ESL teacher reported that she knew language-minority students who had dropped out after junior high "because of a lack of follow-up and services at the high school level."

"Many, many schools have nothing for these kids, or they provide only limited services," says Carole Hunt of the Center for National Origin, Race, and Sex Equity operated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. "Not much has changed since the Lau decision, and now we are going in the other direction. There's a big faction of folks who are against bilingual education."

Nationwide, more than a quarter of students with limited English proficiency get no special services, either to help them learn English or to understand what's being taught, according to the National Association for Bilingual Education. This neglect takes a heavy toll: Only half of Hispanic students graduate from high school. Their dropout rate is America's highest—twice that of Blacks and four times that of non-Hispanic Whites.

In earlier eras, immigrants with little education and limited English could land decent jobs in trades or manufacturing. No more. Without advanced skills in communication and technology, today's immigrants will be trapped in low-wage, dead-end jobs. Even in the Santiam Canyon—located, in the words of one Oregon educator, "out in Timbuktu"—a lumber mill uses computerized laser equipment to slice thin sheets of veneer from raw logs. The plant's 25 Hispanic workers, recently hired for entry-level jobs sorting and grading veneer, will need good English skills to move off the green chain into better-paying, high-tech positions, says plant Vice President Rob

Freres. Just down the road from the veneer plant is the True Value hardware store. Even this business, the local source of bolts and screwdrivers, is computerized. Owner Tim Kirsch recently hired a Hispanic man who, Kirsch said, was eager, hardworking, and reliable. But after a few weeks, the employee sent word he wouldn't be coming back: He couldn't master the computer skills he needed for the job.

Second-grader Ascension Tavarez listens to a bilingual teaching assistant at Gates Elementary School. Photo by Jay Reiter.

Even as the numbers of language-minority students rise, the dollars for serving them diminish. Schools can draw on two pots of federal money for meeting the needs of kids with limited English proficiency: Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Emergency Immigrant Education Act. "Funding for these programs has not kept pace with the increase in eligible populations," notes a 1994 report from the U.S. General Accounting Office. According to that report, *Limited English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts*, the $192 million appropriated for Title VII in 1990 was 40 percent less in real dollars than the 1980 appropriation. Funding under the emergency act dropped from $86 per student in 1984 to $29 in 1992. For migrant students, additional money is available under Title VI.

But some schools don't apply for the funds that are available. "Quite a few districts have limited-English-proficient kids but haven't applied for reimbursement dollars," says Flores. "There are several schools that won't identify the kids and some have said, 'We can take care of that child ourselves.'"

Despite balky administrators and shaky programs lingering at some Northwest schools, attitudes and practices are beginning to change, Flores maintains. Asserting that most educators "are concerned about the kids," he says the nation's growing need for a highly skilled labor force makes it essential that educators bring language-minority students into the school-reform loop. Preparing Hispanic and other immigrant children to be equal players in the economic, social, and political life of the community is a job everyone must shoulder together, he says.

David Rosalez agrees. One of six Distinguished Educators helping Oregon schools design schoolwide reform programs, Rosalez has seen a shifting outlook in the small town of Ontario on the state's eastern fringe, where he makes his home. He says Ontario's residents, educators, and business owners have come to recognize the benefits of providing solid schooling to *all* future citizens and consumers in the community. (See article, Page 8).

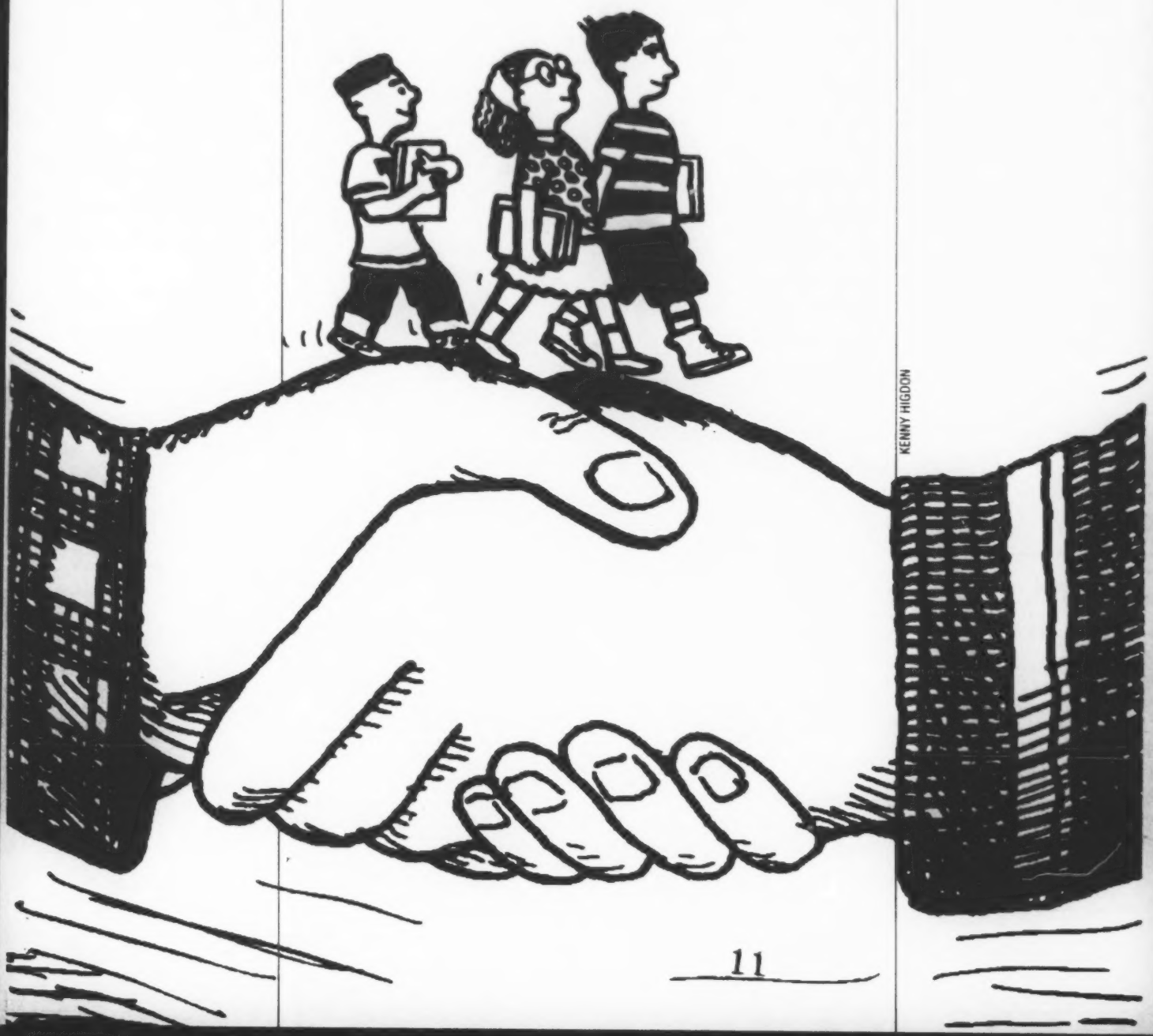
"If we don't educate these children, who's going to pay for our retirement?" Rosalez asks. "Who will be the leaders of the community? If we don't educate them, are we promoting two different social classes? And if so, who's going to support those at the bottom?

"The best bet," he says, "is educating them and making them productive citizens." ■

Two Worlds in One Classroom

OREGON'S ONTARIO SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS JOINED HANDS WITH A PROGRESSIVE DISTRICT IN TEXAS IN DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE BILINGUAL PROGRAM

By TONY KNEIDEK



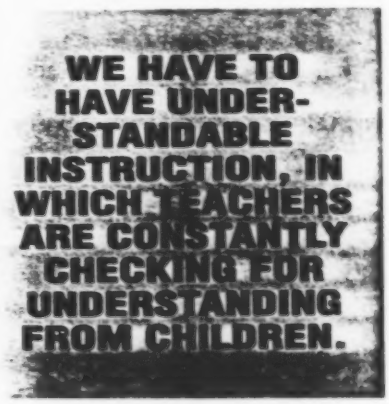
KENNY HIGDON

trict, which bumps the Mexican border in the Southwest corner of Texas, serves a student population that is 98 percent Hispanic. In just six years, the district has turned around low test scores, high dropout rates, and dismal academic records. Today, the district boasts a 98 percent student completion rate with 90 percent of the students at grade level.

The Ontario schools have provided staff development on cultural awareness and brought in nationally recognized speakers. They also participate in an innovative program to provide tuition and expenses for local bilingual people who want to pursue a college teaching degree. (See related story, Page 11.) But they still needed to find better ways to teach their Hispanic students.

"We wanted to change, but we weren't making the progress we wanted to make," Guyer says. "We hit a point where we just didn't know how to change anymore. We also felt that if we could see a successful model of bilingual education—especially those of us who are visual learners—we could do it."

Enter Ontario's relationship with the Socorro schools, where principals and district administrators have observed classroom practices and talked with teachers, principals, and students. What they saw has helped them better visualize what they want to develop in Ontario. And much of the framework already is in place because of statewide restructuring of education in Oregon. "The thing we saw that correlated so well were the statewide assessments, standards, and benchmarks," Guyer says. "The whole focus of the Socorro schools is on those standards. Every teacher knows what those standards are and is working toward them. Their whole mission is to help these kids meet standards."


WE HAVE TO HAVE UNDER-STANDABLE INSTRUCTION, IN WHICH TEACHERS ARE CONSTANTLY CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING FROM CHILDREN.

The Ontario district is launching its own program to provide an equitable education for all students. It is in the process of establishing baseline data, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and adopting districtwide goals. "We're really in our infancy," Guyer notes. "This year, we're focusing on bilingual education. When we were in Socorro, we could see that the bilingual person was used not to teach Spanish, but to clarify instruction given in English. We've got to get to the point where our kids have understandable instruction."

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING NECESSARY

Ontario is a community that takes pride in its cultural diversity. For a rural town of about 10,000 residents, it has a broad cross section of cultures, and a rich history of diverse settlers. Northern Paiute Indians were among the first inhabitants, and Mexicans were among the early settlers. Basque shepherds also moved to the area in the late 1800s, and nearby Boise, Idaho, was an important stop along the Oregon Trail. Japanese living in the United States worked the farm fields during World War II, when they were released from internment in central Idaho.

Today, about 8 percent of the population is Japanese American, and the Japan Nite-Obon Festival each summer is a popular community event. The area's substantial Hispanic American population grew as a result of field work in the region's agricultural industry.

ONTARIO, Oregon—Fifth-grade teacher Xochitl Fuhriman-Ebert moves in two worlds in her classroom as easily as she moves among the students working in groups on math and writing assignments.

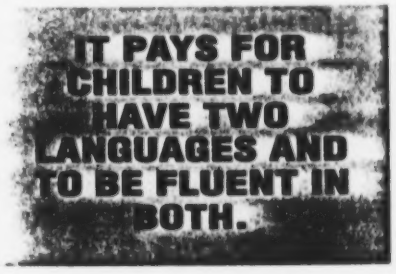
A student's hand goes up—an indication that he is stuck on a concept or idea—and Fuhriman-Ebert is at his side discussing in English the student's work. A quizzical look tells Fuhriman-Ebert that the student still doesn't fully understand. The teacher explains the concept again—this time in Spanish—and a smile spreads across the student's face.

"Comprehension is critical," says Fuhriman-Ebert. "And if a student isn't understanding something in English, I explain it to them in Spanish."

Many of the 20 students in Fuhriman-Ebert's classroom live in Spanish-speaking families, but are taught in schools dominated by English. Jaime Oriedo, the 10-year-old class treasurer, reflects the bilingual and bicultural world of his Hispanic classmates. "My family speaks mostly Spanish," he says. "But my mom speaks Spanish and English, and so do I."

Fuhriman-Ebert says she practices bilingual education in her classroom to clarify concepts for students and to show respect for the children and their heritage. "I use Spanish to boost their self-esteem—their pride in who they are, and their pride in their culture," she says.

Fuhriman-Ebert is the exception at Lindbergh Elementary School, where 75 percent of the children are Hispanic. She is the only bilingual teacher in the school, and one of just a handful in the Ontario School District, where nearly 45 percent of the students are Hispanic. "Fifth grade is not the grade to begin a bilingual program," Fuhriman-Ebert says. "It should start in the first grade so that by fifth grade the students are dual-language. It pays for children to have two languages and to be fluent in both."



The Ontario School District has begun a districtwide focus on bilingual education that officials are hopeful will better serve the approximately 1,200 Hispanic students who attend the district's eight schools. "In five years," says Ron Guyer, director of special education and student services, "we want to have the disaggregated scores of Hispanic children equal to other students. But we also want all students' scores to go up in the district."

The district has decided to focus on bilingual education as part of a larger effort to boost standardized test scores of all students. Districtwide, notes Guyer, students score around the 40th percentile. However, when district officials disaggregated test scores two years ago, they found that Hispanic students were lingering at the 20th percentile on standardized tests.

"I think that, in some places, there was some denial around here," notes Guyer. "When we disaggregated our test scores, though, it all came to the surface. Up to this point, we didn't know any better. We did the best we could with the knowledge we brought to the table. Now, we have more knowledge and we must do better."

Twice this year, district administrators and principals have traveled to the Socorro Independent School District in El Paso, Texas. (See related story, Page 18.) The Socorro Dis-

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH

ONTARIO, Oregon—If you want bilingual teachers who are familiar with the community and sensitive to its needs, you might try growing your own.

That's the approach that several school districts in Eastern Oregon and Idaho are taking in an effort to bolster their bilingual teaching, counseling, and administrative staff with educators who are committed to the area. Dr. Jay Fuhriman, director of bilingual teacher education programs at Boise State College, has secured nearly $1 million in federal grants to help bilingual people earn bachelor's degrees and teacher certification. "We have had major problems, not just here, but all over the country, in getting sufficient bilingual teachers to meet the needs of our students," Fuhriman says. "Our population is growing and we find that we need more and more teachers."

Northwest districts with the need for Spanish-English bilingual teachers have recruited unsuccessfully in Texas, New Mexico, California, Arizona, and other states, Fuhriman adds. "We decided that the best way—indeed, the only way—to get the teachers we need was to find young people who have an interest in teaching, but who could not afford it or did not have the background to pursue a degree."

In 1976, the first year of the grant, 27 young people entered the program. Most of them were Hispanic, and most of them did not have a high school diploma or GED. "Twenty-one of them finished the program and became teachers," Fuhriman says. The grant has been renewed annually since then. It has helped more than 200 bilingual young people, most of them Hispanic, obtain their teaching degree.

The Ontario School District is among those participating in the program this year. The district has had little success recruiting bilingual teachers. "People are not necessarily interested in moving to Eastern Oregon," notes Carole Kitamura, personnel director at the 2,800-student K-12 district. "The whole issue of trying to grow our own is the only way we can see to increase our bilingual staff. We have a lot of diamonds in the rough—people who are already here and enhancing our community and schools. But they don't have a degree. It's nice to be able to take advantage of the great resources we have here. By helping local people get teaching degrees, we're creating a greater sense of family—a stronger community."

Ontario's schools, with a Hispanic student population close to 45 percent, have about 6 percent bilingual staff, Kitamura says. The district's goal is to increase its bilingual professional staff to 15 to 20 percent in the next five years.

Alfredo Ponce, an instructional aide at Lindbergh Elementary School in Ontario, is among those participating in the program. Ponce attended elementary school here, then graduated from high school in Hermiston, Oregon. He served in the Army and lived in Minnesota before returning to Ontario to participate in the program.

"The grant has opened the door for me to teach and help kids," Ponce says. "I see a lot of kids who think that muscle and force and brute strength is power. They don't understand that education is the real power."

Ponce says that it is important for children of Hispanic descent to learn to read and write English while retaining their Spanish language and culture. "If I can become a bilingual teacher, I can really help students," he says. "When I went to school, if you couldn't speak English you were kind of pushed off to the side. You can never forget who you are. I want to help students retain their Spanish language and to learn English and retain the two."

And that, notes Fuhriman, is the key to providing a bilingual education program that respects the culture of the language minority student while building a new framework for learning. "In a dual-language program, the language and the culture (of two languages) are both taught," he says. "You're looking at maintaining the native language and the native culture of the student while building a new language and a new culture for them. You can't really teach a language outside of its cultural context. You just lose the meaning. Language is probably the purest form of culture."

—Tony Kneidek

Cinco de Mayo, the Mexican celebration of independence, also is a popular community festival. The Ontario Basque Club sponsors a community festival as well. And last June, work began on the 74,000-square-foot Western Treasure Valley Cultural Center, a $12.5 million facility that will honor the various cultures in the region.

Despite the rich diversity, stereotypical images of Hispanic Americans surfaced during redistricting meetings in 1991-92, Guyer says. "I was shocked. There were people who said publicly that they didn't want their white kids to be in school with brown kids."

The district sees increased parental involvement as a way to begin breaking down some of those attitudes. "We want all parents represented in our schools so they can start talking to each other," Guyer says. "We need to get to know people for who they are, not just for how they look."

BARRIERS CRUMBLE AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Luigi Yannotta knew he was taking on a tough task when he accepted the principalship at Lindbergh Elementary School.

The school, with 98 percent of its students on free or reduced-price lunch, had a reputation for low student achievement, little parental involvement, and uninspired leadership. "It was the perception that Lindbergh parents didn't care, that there was nothing you could do to get them involved," Guyer says.

Yannotta has quickly disposed of the perceptions about his school and community. He has been instrumental in creating a new reality at Lindbergh, where 75 percent of the school's 260 students are Hispanic.

DIRECT PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN ACADEMICS IMPROVES STUDENT VALUES. IF IT'S IMPORTANT TO PARENTS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO STUDENTS.

"This is not unlike other schools where I've been," says Yannotta, who moved to Ontario after working in education for three years in Bolivia, four years in Ecuador, and eight years in bilingual programs in California. "There's a high number of Spanish-speaking children and families, and a low level of parental involvement."

Cultural differences, Yannotta notes, can prevent parents from becoming involved in schools, but celebrating the cultures of others can help break down barriers. "In Spanish populations, it is believed that the school is the exclusive shepherd of the child's education," Yannotta says. "That is changing, but we have to foster that change."

In his first year at Lindbergh, Yannotta has brought about 90 percent of the parents into the school. To set the stage at the beginning of the year, the school hosted a Mexican fiesta complete with a mariachi band, food, a slide show, and presentations about the school's goals for children presented in English and Spanish.

Yannotta also established a parent center in the school and has created teams of English- and Spanish-speaking parents who go door-to-door in the attendance area to encourage families to get involved. He also is arranging for Treasure Valley Community College to offer GED, effective parenting, ESL (English as a Second Language), and other adult classes at Lindbergh.

"I'm a believer in the research," Yannotta says. "In my experience with successful bilingual education programs, I have seen how

direct parent involvement in academics improves student values. If it's important to parents, it's important to students."

In the parent center, Susan Summers tallies the results of a family survey and boasts of how Lindbergh parents are coming together. Nearly 70 people attended the second general parents' meeting, she says, and many are continuing their involvement in issues ranging from school safety to academic excellence to constructive discipline. "I was born in this town," Summers says. "I've been in this school system all my life, but I just got involved in this school because my granddaughter goes here and she lives with me."

Summers refers to a "pulse" that emanates from the school and encourages parents to take active roles in their children's education. "Our parents are becoming more involved," she says. "Making children the focus of concern has pulled the parents together."

Lindbergh parents and families were alarmed when a recent architectural report indicated that the school could not withstand high winds or even a minor earthquake. Concern for the safety of their children has become a rallying point, but other issues have also emerged. "People want to know how they can get their GED, how they can make their kids do their homework, how they should discipline their kids, and what's on the school lunch menu," Summers says. "This center really allows us to make friends and establish relationships with people of different beliefs and cultures."

COMPONENTS OF SUCCESS

Dr. Jay Fuhriman, who has taught bilingual education at Boise State University for two decades, says there are four overarching objectives of successful bilingual education programs. They are:

- Teach English so that students can become proficient in it
- Maintain students at grade level
- Require that language-minority students are held to the same rigorous academic standards as other students
- Ensure that students meet graduation standards on time

These components, Fuhriman says, are critical to helping students learn successfully. For example, students who are retained for just one year are half as likely to graduate as those who are at grade level. Retain a student for two years, he adds, and chances of graduating are reduced by 95 percent.

"It is so detrimental to retain children, especially for language," Fuhriman says. "It is much more effective to teach them the content area in a language that's understandable to them while at the same time teaching them English. If we teach them content in their native language, they can stay at grade level, albeit in a different language, but still at grade level. You know, math is math regardless of the language. Knowledge is knowledge regardless of the language."

VARIETY OF APPROACHES NEEDED

Yannotta believes that bilingual education alone will not provide equity for all students. "The emphasis at Lindbergh School is on literacy," he says. "We have to have understandable instruction, in which teachers are constantly checking for understanding from children."

But other teaching methods and attitudes also must change, he maintains. The old ways of doing business are no longer effective in today's diverse classrooms. "In years past, we had teacher-directed instruction. Those who caught on did fine. But the kid in the back row got left behind. He was alone. Now we have a lot of student-directed instruction. We use a lot of cooperative learning, and we've got students helping students in small work groups. We need all of these efforts." ■

A rural Oregon district helps Hispanic families settle into the community

If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other islands, but a continent that joins to them."

–Francis Bacon
Essays, 1625

From a rear booth at Giovanni's Mountain Pizza, School Board Chairman Arnie White sips coffee, looking out at Highway 22 as he talks. The midday traffic, heading east toward Central Oregon or west toward the Willamette Valley, kicks up sheets of winter rain as it passes. "In a society that is becoming more and more diverse, you can't raise a child without diversity," White says, his hands wrapped around his coffee cup. "It's not that simple anymore. We're going to have to get along with the whole world."

Most of the world bypasses Mill City, a 1,600-resident hamlet hidden in the foothills of the Cascades along the North Santiam River. To Oregonians, Mill City is known mainly as a way station on the road to Bend or Salem. But White has a broader view of the timber-dependent mill town that has been his home for 20 years. He sees a town increasingly tied to the world community, linked to the international marketplace of goods and ideas in which Mill City's children must be prepared to participate.

"It's going to be a global society a lot sooner than we think," he predicts. "The worst thing we can do is to send our children out there with a narrow-minded perspective."

White's global outlook has been influenced to a large degree by one group that not long ago was among Mill City's passersby. Hispanic seasonal workers—once drawn to the area as tree planters, bean pickers, and fruit packers—are dropping out of the migrant stream and settling into permanent jobs. Like many rural Northwest communities, Mill City has experienced a dramatic increase in Hispanic residents as workers settle, often joined by extended families—brothers, cousins, aunts, and uncles—who come north from Mexico or other Latin American countries in search of employment and educational opportunities.

The Hispanic influx comes at a time of wrenching change in the Santiam Canyon. Several family-owned mills have closed in recent years after federal timber sales were blocked to protect spotted owl habitat. The closures rippled throughout the canyon. For every mill job lost, another two or three related workers were displaced, says Rob Freres, vice president of Freres Lumber Company, a veneer plant and stud mill in Lyons just west of Mill City.

"It really tore the fabric of the community," Freres says. "Some long-term folks were forced to move. A crisis center was established, where there had never been a need for one in the past."

Faced with logging cutbacks and bitter battles over owls and old growth, many local residents who had always counted on timber began to feel there was no future in the woods and mills. Says Freres: "People in the canyon are not applying for jobs here in the numbers we would like. You can't blame them, after years of being bombarded with bad publicity."

Hispanic workers have stepped in to fill the employment gap.

Plumes of steam rising white against the wooded foothills are the most visible sign of the canyon's economic heartbeat—its mills. Inside the Freres plant equipped with the latest in lasers and computers, Hispanic workers mostly pull green chain, an entry-level job sorting green veneer by size and grade as it drops with a loud *ka-thunk! ka-thunk! ka-thunk*! onto a conveyor belt. The plant's last 25 openings, in fact, have been filled by Hispanics, who now make up 10 percent of Freres' workforce. Other canyon mills also have taken on Hispanic workers.

"In the late '80s, we would get maybe 10 Hispanic applicants a year; now we get 100," says Personnel Manager Tim McCollister. Freres Lumber also contracts with several Hispanic-owned companies specializing in brush disposal, tree planting, and slash burning.

"Hispanics come from the farms and the fields and the forests, and they're not afraid of hard work," Freres says. "We've seen the Hispanic community starting businesses, buying homes, putting down roots."

"How do you say Super Nintendo in Spanish?" Miguel asks his teacher. Along with his classmates in Gates Elementary School's bilingual, multiage classroom, the first-grader is writing a letter to Santa Claus in Spanish. No sugarplums here: Power Rangers, Barbies, and Rollerblades are the Christmas visions dancing in these kids' heads.

Miguel, like many canyon students whose first language is Spanish, switches easily from his native tongue when conversing with one of the classroom's two bilingual

aides, to English when talking to English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and program coordinator Joyce Gleason. Miguel, in fact, asks Gleason if he can write two letters, one in each language. As an astute member of a multicultural community, Miguel already understands that being multilingual can be advantageous in matters both personal and professional. Who, after all, knows for sure which languages Santa speaks? Why limit your options when Super Nintendo is at stake?

While the first-graders are putting in their orders to the North Pole, the kindergartners are grouped at an adjacent table doing an exercise on days of the week: "*Ayer fue jueves; hoy es viernes; mañana será sabado,*" the children chime along with the bilingual aide as she points to the words displayed on a flip chart. They then recite a poem about a piñata:

Bajen la piñata,
bájenla un tantito,
que le den de palos
poquito a poquito.

"We try to use songs and poems as a connection to their roots, their culture," says Gleason. "We encourage them to use Spanish. We send home books in Spanish so they will read with their parents and older siblings."

Gleason describes Mill City's approach as "first-language literacy with whole-language methods."

"Kids are programmed to learn, to make sense out of language," says Gleason. "If they're surrounded by language, they'll pick it up. Our job is to surround them with language that is important to them, that they can make sense of."

In the decade between 1985 and 1995, Hispanic enrollment in the Santiam Canyon School District tripled—from about 20 students (just over 3 percent of total enrollment) to almost 60 (close to 8 percent). The biggest jump happened last year, when language-minority enrollment doubled. Gleason, along with Vivian Ang, the district's migrant education coordinator, revamped the bilingual/ESL program when the flood of new Hispanic students, coinciding with changes in Title I regulations (see Page 36), gave the district additional federal funds and more flexibility for hiring staff, buying materials, and training teachers.

Gleason, who was part-time last year, now spends full days teaching the district's language-minority students. In the mornings, she leads bilingual classes for mixed-aged groupings of kindergartners through fourth-graders. At midday, she works with high school students, teaching English and tutoring kids who come by the migrant education office to study. In the afternoon, she team-teaches with the sixth-grade social studies teacher at the middle school, where language-minority students are served in regular classes with extra support from bilingual aides and peer tutors.

"Some of our teachers," says Gleason, "have teaching styles that are student centered, with lots of hands-on and cooperative learning projects that are ideal for students with limited English proficiency. One of our goals is to help all of our teachers to recognize that thematic units, manipulatives, cooperative grouping, and the use of visuals—graphs, charts, videos, pictures, maps—are beneficial to all students, and are essential for students trying to gain content knowledge through their second language."

But the issues reach far beyond the classroom and go much deeper than curriculum. Superintendent Bob Sari, a longtime rural educator whose door is propped open with a scuffed pair of cowboy boots, has seen the effects of a changing population in Oregon communities as he's moved from small district to small district—from Mt. Vernon to Phoenix to Elgin and Crane and, finally, to Santiam Canyon last year.

"If you travel the state," he says, "the sentiment of a lot of older Oregonians is no different here in Mill City than it is in Woodburn or anywhere else." Those older Oregonians who grew up during the "war years," he says, often view ESL and bilingual education as "baloney." And, Sari adds, the canyon has its share of "redneck folks" who don't welcome diversity. While Sari minimizes the negative attitudes, he admits that the newcomers are shaking up towns like Mill City that not long ago were insular and homogeneous.

"Our whole system, the personality of the community, is being affected by the change in people and how well they are going to meld into the community," Sari observes. "You have a lot of adjusting that's going to be necessary, and a lot of work to blend these people in."

Viewing the classroom experiences of Spanish-speaking children, then, as just one act in a full-length drama that casts the whole community, Gleason and Ang, with solid support from the superintendent and school board, wrote a plan for the district that went to the heart of the matter: attitudes. Racial friction had surfaced in the schools. Two years ago, a pair of promising Hispanic high schoolers dropped out. When Ang pressed them for a reason, they told her, "Some of the kids have been harassing us, and we're just tired of fighting it." Ang recounts other incidents: a group of freshman boys picking fights with Hispanic eighth-graders. Two Hispanic girls becoming frightened when several non-Hispanic girls followed them after school, taunting them with insults.

"The parents were concerned and the police were called," says Ang. "But it has not been handled, I feel, to the level or to the depth that it needs to really resolve the issue. Getting the kids to shake hands and say, 'It's OK' isn't enough because it doesn't solve the *inner* turmoil."

That turmoil was underlined dramatically again this year when, in two separate incidents, non-Hispanic kids pulled weapons—one was a gun, the other a knife—on Hispanic students off-campus, according to Ang.

"These are the reasons," she asserts, "why we felt it was necessary to approach it on a community level. It was more than the school district could handle alone."

Maria Martinez and her husband harvested lettuce in Southern California until the gangs and traffic and crowds caused them to look northward, toward the forested Oregon river canyon where a relative had prospered pulling green chain at a plywood mill. As the daughter of seasonal laborers who had migrated between Mexico and Texas, Martinez had seen conditions for farmworkers deteriorate: "more work, less pay, more strict," is the way she puts it.

So Martinez—one of three Marias who assist Joyce Gleason in her ESL classrooms—moved to Mill City to settle with her family. She divides her time between the

classroom and the Mexican restaurant, Sierra, which she owns and operates with her husband. The canyon, she says, is a good place to raise her three children. Still, the family has had a few painful episodes. She recalls that one administrator, no longer with the district, ignored her whenever she was in the building. "He just pretended I wasn't there," she says. And her middle son, a 10-year-old, came home upset one day after another child made disparaging remarks about his Mexican heritage.

Incidents like these spurred the district to invite Martinez and other Hispanic parents to a November meeting with principals and counselors from each of the district's four schools to air grievances and share perceptions. An impartial translator from nearby Chemeketa Community College acted as an intermediary.

"The parents said they felt that the teachers and administrators needed some training on how to be more culturally aware and sensitive to the needs of Hispanic children," says Ang.

In response, the district invited cultural-competency trainer Daniel Duarte of Tualatin, Oregon, to put on a workshop in January for school staff, police officers, and Hispanic parents to, in Ang's words, "help people become more accepting culturally and know how to cross some of those bridges that separate us."

Meanwhile, the district spearheaded an interagency meeting aimed at brainstorming strategies to calm community jitters about the canyon's changing demographics. Mill City, seeing gang- and drug-related problems arise in the neighboring town of Stayton, wants to head off such troubles, says Ang. Present at the invitational meeting in late November were key community players: police officers, migrant education staff, and representatives of the Canyon Crisis Center and the Santiam Canyon Youth and Families Alliance—a volunteer community agency that has received funds from the Marion County Commission on Children and Families to operate the Family Resource Center (providing bilingual information and resources) and the Community Assistance Center (providing donated food and clothing). Lieutenant Raul Ramirez of the Marion County Sheriff's Office facilitated.

> "Hispanics come from the farms and the fields and the forests, and they're not afraid of hard work. We've seen the Hispanic community starting businesses, buying homes, putting down roots."

Out of that meeting has emerged what Ang describes as a "loosely structured" group called the Community Awareness and Education Committee to "build relationships" and address the community's cultural, economic, law enforcement, and local government concerns on an ongoing basis.

Other recent or upcoming events include:

- Diversity Day, an all-day event at Santiam High School featuring Steven Schoonmaker of the Salem Police Department and including interactive games that give kids a chance to view cultural differences from the perspective of the other group; presentations at the elementary and middle schools will focus on hurtful words
- International Day, a potluck gathering where Hispanic and non-Hispanic families are matched up for games and activities, sponsored in collaboration with community agencies
- A "survival Spanish" class for teachers

The school board has been 100 percent behind the district's initiative on behalf of Hispanic children and their parents, Chairman Arnie White asserts. It's a role that in his mind properly belongs to the schools.

"In a community this size, the school district is the hub," he says.

See Citizens, Page 39

Great Expectations

Students at Socorro High School near the U.S./Mexico border are inspired to succeed by caring teachers and progressive administrators who expect the best and accept no excuses

BY LEE SHERMAN CAUDELL

FIRST PERIOD *"Who were the unusual members of Hannibal's army in the Punic Wars?" the teacher asks as she walks among the seated ninth-graders, a piece of chalk poised in her hand.*

"Elephants!" calls out a ponytailed 14-year-old.

"Right, Olga. Good." World history teacher Kara Eifolla strides to the board and adds Hannibal and his battalion of wild beasts to a growing time line of ancient Rome. Leading Olga Lara and her classmates through the empire's rise and fall, Eifolla coaxes understanding from them with a carefully paced give-and-take that pulls in every student, even a fidgety cluster of boys striving for invisibility in the back of the room. Speaking in English, she guides her class of native Spanish speakers through difficult linguistic terrain cluttered with such knotty concepts as plebeians, patricians, and agricultural reform with a Q&A format that systematically reinforces oral language with written language: The student hears the word, sees it on the board, reads it in the text, writes it in her notebook. Eifolla questions, repeats, defines, clarifies, and questions again: What does "decline" mean? What is a "crisis"? What is a "reform"?

A few days into her second semester at a U.S. school, Olga—equipped with a considerable repertoire of English skills picked up from friends and TV in her native town of Ciudad Juárez just across the border—pays close attention to the time line taking shape on the chalkboard. It will form the basis of an upcoming assignment: a handmade book on the Roman Empire. When the bell rings, Olga gathers her belongings and blends into the throng of students hurrying to Second Period.

In many ways, Socorro, Texas, feels like an extension of Mexico, as though Ciudad Juárez had spilled across the Rio Grande. Much of Socorro has the thrown-together look of a town that is fast gobbling up the fields and open spaces that only a few years ago made it a rural outpost on the fringe of El Paso. Chain-link fences surround houses pieced together with brick, stucco, and concrete. Laundry flaps on clotheslines. Chickens roost in backyards.

Most of Socorro's residents trace their roots to Mexico. Many of them, like ninth-grader Olga Lara, are recent arrivals. Olga's parents moved the family across the border last summer in hopes of finding better jobs for themselves and ensuring better futures for their three teenagers. The Laras have put their educational hopes into the hands of the teachers and administrators at Socorro High School, whose 2,000 students come from the town's poorest neighborhoods. Some live without plumbing, heat, or electricity. Almost all qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Socorro's student demographics—98 percent Hispanic, 90 percent poor—would suggest a cauldron of violence and gang activity. Yet Olga's parents chose Socorro High because it is relatively free of the *Cholos* gang members who plague other area schools. Neither graffiti nor vandalism mars the

spotless school, where custodians are always hard at work with paintbrushes and mops. A new wing at the school features vaulted ceilings, rock walls, and soaring windows that look more like something out of *Architectural Digest* than *Educational Facility Planner*.

The conventional wisdom on "risk factors"—characteristics such as ethnic minority heritage and low family income that can short-circuit academic success—would predict not only big discipline problems at Socorro but also low scores and high attrition. Yet the numbers defy the stereotypes. Fewer than 2 percent of Socorro's students drop out, and 85 percent of Socorro's 1995 graduates went on to technical school or college. Scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) are at or above state averages—in some cases, well above. Socorro's 1995 12th-grade class, for instance, scored 42 in reading compared with an average state score of 33. In writing, those same students scored a full 20 points higher than students statewide (71 versus 51). And in math, Socorro kids outscored other kids 43 to 35.

It wasn't that long ago that Socorro High was just another struggling border school with test scores bumping the floor. Today, it is a Blue Ribbon school that attracts educators from places as distant as Ontario, Oregon, in search of strategies to borrow. (See

related story, Page 8.) But trying to pinpoint the reason for the transformation is a classic chicken-and-egg conundrum. Ask the teachers, and they will point to Principal Michael Quatrini. Ask Quatrini, and he will point to the teachers. And everyone points to Dr. Jerry Barber, the district superintendent, who points back at the teachers and principal. The answer lies somewhere in the middle, for change at Socorro High bubbled up from the bottom at the same time it was filtering down from the top. In the blending and mixing of inspired teaching and enlightened administration, Socorro began to turn out students who could compete and succeed in a highly competitive global economy.

SECOND PERIOD *"Eduardo dropped out of school," laments teacher Dennese Weber-Watts. She looks at the semicircle of students in front of her as though waiting for an explanation for this bad news. The students, too, seem sad and perplexed. It is clear, even to the casual observer, that kids at Socorro don't drift away unnoticed or unremarked. Here, dropouts aren't business as usual.*

Second Period is speech. Olga's favorite class because, she says, she's eager to learn the linguistic skills she'll need when she becomes a lawyer. Today's lesson begins with the Greek and Latin roots of English words. The Greek word logos, *meaning "word" or "study," for example, turns up in the English terms for academic disciplines such as biology and psychology. Weber-Watts tells the class. As she talks, she draws feedback from the students with constant questioning, reinforcing the discussion visually by scrawling the roots and their derivatives on the overhead projector. Next, Weber-Watts calls on Olga to lead a review of "voiced" versus "unvoiced" sounds. In floppy cotton pants and a denim vest, big silver loops dangling from her ears, Olga takes the teacher's place at the front of the class. With some prompting from Weber-Watts, Olga holds her hand to her throat and demonstrates the vocal-chord vibration that characterizes voiced consonants. She then moves to a discussion of blended consonants such as pl, fl, sl, and scr. Weber-Watts offers clues and guidance when Olga gets stuck.*

What turned Socorro High School around was a radical change in thinking about how schools should be organized and managed. There was—to invoke a hot phrase from education's current reform lingo—a paradigm shift. Eight years ago when Jerry Barber (whom school staff describe as "open-minded" and "progressive") became superintendent of Socorro Independent School District, he put each school in charge of its own operations—and, by extension, made it accountable for its outcomes—by mandating site-based management. That mandate came several years before Texas required site-based management statewide.

Not everyone got on board.

"Some principals bought into site-based decisionmaking, and some did not," says Maria Arias, bilingual director for the district. "Some had a real difficult time letting go, being a facilitator, letting teachers come together and make decisions about how money would be spent and so forth."

Then came Quatrini. When he took the high school principal's post in 1992, he set out to make site-based management work at Socorro High School. "At first, teachers were doubtful," Arias recalls. "But little by little, he won their confidence, their faith, their trust, because he has proven that the teachers *can* run the school and he can facilitate."

Quatrini reorganized the freshmen and sophomores into blocks of 125 students who are assigned to five teachers for the entire year. The teachers in these blocks share a common daily conference period, and they meet weekly to plan thematic units and integrated lessons, devise strategies for struggling students, and confer with parents. A school-improvement team made up of staff, parents, and students meets monthly to keep the school moving toward its goals.

The Language Brokers

Classes for language-minority students at Socorro High School are taught in English. But when teachers divide their class into groups for collaborative projects or interactive learning, students often talk among themselves in Spanish.

Magda Maureira, ESL department head, encourages students to converse in their native tongue. Here's why:

"The more you can get kids to talk to each other, the more opportunities they have to sound off to each other, to filter through stuff, the better," she says. "It's real important for a kid to sit next to someone else and say, 'Did I understand? The teacher said da-da-da-da-da.' Sometimes, that's when learning is happening, that's when they're clarifying.

"We have this heterogeneity of kids, and among them are the language brokers who have more (English) than the others. You just have to bank that those kids are out there and that they're going to share and clarify. For the language broker, understanding may happen from teacher to ear, but that won't happen across the board.

"Ultimately, whatever the kids are going to turn in is going to have to be in English. Whatever it takes to get there should be allowed. That's critical in training teachers because a lot of people don't understand that use of native language." ■

The terms "umbrella" and "net" pop up a lot in Quatrini's conversation —terms that suggest a sheltered environment where "slipping through the cracks" isn't something that happens to kids.

"We don't fail these students," Quatrini declares. "As long as there's support for them, they'll be successful."

One block, the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, has undergone its own radical reform, which began independently of the schoolwide change effort but then merged smoothly into the school's new shape. Olga is one of about 200 language-minority students at Socorro who take all of their academic classes from teachers who specialize in ESL or who, like Kara Eifolla in history or Denise Weber-Watts in speech and Latin, have earned or are working toward ESL endorsements and use ESL methods to teach academic subjects. ESL students read the same textbooks and learn the same material as their English-proficient counterparts. Only the style of delivery is different. After all, Quatrini points out, these kids "don't have a *learning* problem, they have a *language* problem."

Eighty teachers—nearly half of the school's faculty—have earned or are working toward an ESL endorsement. The district not only picks up tuition costs for teachers who earn ESL credits, it also awards them $1,000 annual stipends for teaching ESL sections and sends bilingual aides to college if they want to become teachers.

THIRD AND FOURTH PERIODS *After art class, where Olga designs a ceramic house patterned on the Historic Revival style of architecture, she takes her place in Rosanne Loya Thompson's physical science class. Today's lesson in forces and motion centers on the formula for calculating speed. "Speed equals distance divided by time," Thompson says, rephrasing the formula several times, writing it on the board, checking often for understanding by asking for feedback from students. Building on last week's lesson on metric units of measure, the teacher—dressed comfortably in a neat pair of blue jeans—gets down on the floor and demonstrates how to apply the formula to a concrete problem: calculating the speed of a plastic wind-up car using a meter stick and a stopwatch. The students watch intently. The room is silent except for the car's raspy clatter.*

"OK, what is the speed of a car that moves 914 meters in 200 seconds?" Thompson asks after the demo car lurches to a stop beside the meter stick and the class helps convert the distance from centimeters to meters. Olga scribbles in her notebook. "Who has the answer? How fast was the car going? Olga?"

"Four-point-five-seven meters per second," Olga responds.

After working several sample problems for the class, Thompson breaks the students into groups and assigns them to collaborate on six trials with the mechanical cars. Olga and her group mates confer in Spanish as they time their trials and record their data.

Socorro High School was making do with two part-time ESL teachers until the enrollment began to balloon after the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. The legislation granted legal residency to longtime seasonal agricultural laborers who could document their U.S. work history.

"That's when our program blew up," recalls Magda Maureira, one of the original ESL staffers. "By the summer of 1988 it was out of control. Schools were starting to *burst* with (language-minority) kids."

Help arrived in the form of a federal bilingual education grant under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The almost $1 million flowing into the high school from 1990 through 1994 created five full-time ESL teaching slots, bought a roomful of Macintoshes and materials, and paid for a curriculum consultant. The reinvented ESL program bridges the "huge gaps from one class to another" that used to swallow kids up, says Maureira, who now heads Socorro High School's ESL department. Now, students like Olga have ESL-trained teachers all day, every day—teachers who collaborate to "provide a continuum in the curriculum," says Michael Quatrini. A recent unit on *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, pulled together language arts (Shakespeare's play), history (15th-century Italy), science (the chemical makeup of poisons), and math (calculating dosages of substances). As a tie-in to a unit on Mexico, the home economics class baked a room-size cake in the shape of Mexico, decorating it to show states and topographical features. The cake was served to parents at a school-sponsored meeting on immigration issues, while students from the parenting class provided child care. In these ways, a lesson on baking became a unit on geography, and chemistry found its way into classic literature.

Besides integrating curriculum, Socorro's ESL teachers use tactics such as real-world context, active learning, cooperative grouping, and personal connections.

"We have built our program around whole-language concepts, not the worksheet approach," says Elvira Estrada, secondary ESL/bilingual teacher and teacher leader. "We don't want isolated skills."

FIFTH PERIOD *Olga takes her seat in Martin Rede's algebra class, which begins with a story problem aimed at preparing the*

23

students for the TAAS, which all seniors must pass to graduate. A student reads the problem aloud, as Rede helps him with pronunciation: "Mary has three rectangular flower beds measuring one-point-five meters by five meters. She has decided to make a tulip border around four sides of each flower bed. If the tulips must be planted 50 centimeters apart, how many tulip bulbs will Mary need?"

As Rede leads the students through the problem and its solution, he checks constantly for understanding, going beyond the math concepts involved.

"What does rectangular mean?" he asks. "Is it spelled differently in English and Spanish?" Although he poses his questions in English, Rede allows the students to answer in Spanish. When the students seem stuck, he moves from English to Spanish, Spanish to English, to ensure comprehension.

"What is a tulip?" Rede asks the students. "What does it look like?" He draws a rough approximation of a tulip on the board, and writes the word, showing the similarity with the Spanish word tulipán. *("They're intimidated by the English," Rede confides later. "I try to show them they already know a lot of English by showing them that many Spanish words*

Above: Ninth-grader Olga Lara visits her mother, also named Olga, at the Good Time mini-market where she works as a cashier. In the photo on Page 20, Olga works with fellow science students to calculate the speed of a wind-up car. Photos by Nohemy Gonzalez.

are similar to the English. Many of these kids do well in physical science and biology because of the Latin roots.")

"What's a bulb?" a student calls out.

"What kind of bulb are we talking about here?" Rede asks. "A foco de luz*—a lightbulb?" A few students snicker. "No? We're talking about a tulip bulb, a* camote. *" He explains how a bulb looks, how it grows, tells them an onion is a bulb, relates it to a potato tuber ("You know, the thing you cut up and fry and put ketchup on"), tells them Easter lilies grow from bulbs. Olga offers jicama as another example. By pulling in all of this—a little reading, a little science, a little English vocabulary—Rede not only has brought the math problem into the realm of real things (flowers, french fries), tying it to students' senses and experiences, but he also has connected math to other areas of study, giving broader meaning and context to the lesson.*

The state of Texas requires only that language-minority students take a yearly oral assessment of English proficiency. Socorro, though, also uses a battery of written tests in Spanish to measure academic and literacy skills such as writing ability and mastery of math concepts. Oral assessments by themselves are only minimally informative, Maureira says. That's because test anxiety can mask solid oral skills and because a student may have a mismatch of abilities: strong oral skills with weak academic skills or vice versa.

"Testing in Spanish makes a whole lot of sense," notes Maureira. "It tells you a whole lot more about where this kid has been and where he can go. The more literacy they bring in their native language, the quicker they go into a second language because they have a lot of transference."

Adds Maureira: "To learn is to learn is to learn. If you learn in one language, you basically learn in another."

The assessments determine where students start in ESL, from Level 1 for kids with low academic scores and no English to Level 4 for kids who are almost ready to join the mainstream. Olga entered Socorro High at Level 3 based on a solid foundation in English and outstanding scores on the written math and language arts assessments. Her dad Fernando, a salesman for a nut company, had plunked her down in front of English-language TV and videos from the time she was small in hopes of giving her a head start on success in America.

Other kids bring less to build on. One of Olga's schoolmates, whom we'll call Maria, had left school in her Mexican hometown of Chihuahua at age 11 or 12 to work in her mother's tortilla factory. The Immigration Reform and Control Act allowed her father, a longtime farmhand at a Texas ranch, to bring his family north to Socorro, where Maria started high school at 16 with scores hovering at fifth-grade levels. Her files show slow, steady progress and then a sudden burst of success in her third year, when her math score rocketed from 52 to 89 and her language-arts score from 41 to 80.

Whether, like Olga, they bring solid skills or, like Maria, they come with a smaller foundation, language-minority students get ongoing support and guidance. Each student is assigned to a committee of four—an assistant principal, a bilingual teacher, an ESL teacher, and a parent—which meets at least twice a year and oversees the student's progress. ESL kids get support in other ways, too. At the weekly "content day," ESL teachers help them work through trouble spots in their academic classes. And the ESL office, staffed by two bilingual paraprofessionals, offers all kinds of assistance, from clarifying homework assignments to arranging counseling appointments. From that office, the constantly humming hub of the program, Estrada and Maureira throw themselves headlong into keeping each and every student on track to graduation.

One day, for example, a student drops into the ESL office and complains that he doesn't understand an assignment given by a non-ESL-endorsed health teacher. While Maureira and Estrada set about getting the student reassigned to an ESL health class, they explain that hasty, verbal instructions are likely to be lost on kids with limited English skills. "Deliberate redundancy"—finding many ways to say the same thing—is one key strategy that characterizes ESL, they explain. "That kid needs to see the assignment on the board, he needs to have it expanded, he needs to have a copy of the prompt," Maureira says. "It's very simple.

"And," she adds, "it's good for all learners."

That kind of personal attention is why Olga's parents brought their children to Socorro.

"What I like here is that if a student has a problem, the teachers take care of it," says Olga's mom, also named Olga, who works as a cashier at a Good Time mini-market. "It doesn't matter if it's a big problem or a small one; they always call you. They always pay attention to the student."

Even parents who still live in Mexico want their kids to have what Socorro High School offers. "You will see cars with license plates from Juárez or Chihuahua dropping off their kids," says Arias, adding, "We're going to educate them. It's not like in California with Proposition 187 [the 1994 ballot measure denying K-12 public education to illegal-immigrant children]."

The school as a whole woos

parents: A parent room staffed by two parent coordinators is the headquarters for parent volunteers who work in the classroom and the library. Counselors work at night to accommodate parents' work schedules. Information goes home in both English and Spanish. Parent meetings cover critical topics such as citizenship and residency, local services, and college opportunities. The high school hosts community-college classes for parents, and makes the school's library and computer equipment available to them.

Parents Night typically attracts 50 percent to 60 percent of parents, Quatrini reports.

"Parents do attend meetings," says Arias. "I get so upset when when people say, 'Parents just don't care.' That's not true—it's just not true."

In the ESL program, strong teacher-student bonds earn parents' respect and participation.

Says Arias: "Because of the closeness of these kids to Magda and Elvira and the other teachers, they will go home and tell their parents, 'My teacher needs to talk to you,' or 'You need to go to this meeting.' And the parents show up because they know that the teachers are genuine."

SIXTH AND SEVENTH PERIODS *Olga's final two classes, English and reading, form the ESL literacy unit that all of Socorro's language-minority students must take. Sixth period meets in the computer lab where Olga and her classmates—working on Macintoshes paid for with Title VII money—experiment with using ClarisWorks software to create decorative borders and ornamental lettering. Their assignment: to make posters out of yesterday's writing project, a list of three personal goals to achieve during the school year. Olga deftly manipulates her mouse, trying out various effects before choosing a delicate border and a bold typeface for her top three school goals: to get better grades, to behave better with her teachers, and to learn more English. By tomorrow, Olga's poster, printed on hot-pink paper, will hang with the other students' work on the classroom wall.*

Magda Maureira begins her reading class with a discussion of Martin Luther King Jr. With the federal holiday marking King's birthday just days away, students had been asking about the civil rights leader and his significance in American history. As Olga and her classmates follow along, Maureira reads a passage about King, speaking slowly, enunciating every syllable with care, filling her voice with inflection. Then she questions the class: "What was the strategy behind the bus boycott? What was King's message for resolving conflict and righting social wrongs? What does "junior" mean? Where was King born? Can you find Atlanta on the map? What's coming up this summer in Atlanta?"

Finally, the lesson turns to The Legend of the White Doe, *a novel by William Hooks set in colonial America. Maureira walks them through their homework assignment, a reading log on Chapter 1. It includes a summary, a personal reaction, a favorite passage or incident, lingering questions or uncertainties about the story, connections to personal experience or other coursework, and new vocabulary learned. The students then pair up and read aloud to one another, alternating sentences. While the voices of their classmates drone in the background, Olga and her partner read earnestly, giggling now and then over their attempts to decipher such thorny words as sassafras.*

In 1987, Socorro Independent School District joined 12 other poor Texas districts in *Edgewood vs. Kirby*. The legal action is what Arias calls a "Robin Hood" suit, originally filed in San Antonio to equalize funding between low-income and affluent districts. Seven years later, the suit is pending. Meanwhile, economic conditions have not improved in the neighborhoods surrounding Socorro High School. Highway 10 slices through town like a razor. It is a '90s version of the "tracks" that once delineated the "good side" from the "bad side" of American cities. Comfortable families live on the north, struggling families—those whose kids attend Socorro High—live on the south. Sometimes, Arias says, ' six, seven, eight people live in one room." They work in restaurants or gas stations or convenience stores, or in factories making boots or blue jeans. Some are migrants, picking cotton in the South, then moving north into the orchards of Oregon and Washington or the potato fields of Idaho.

But at Socorro High School, being poor doesn't justify poor performance. More than any other factor, high expectations in the face of economic hardship explain why the school works, asserts Superintendent Barber. "We do not accept failure," he says. "The faculty and the administration have the attitude that our kids *can* succeed, and that it's our job to help them achieve at the highest levels they can attain. The school will not accept excuses."

Even the poorest families—cooking with butane, drawing water from wells, sharing cramped quarters with aging grandparents, raising poultry to stretch food dollars—send their kids to Socorro High School with hope.

Reports Arias: "We always hear, 'We want our kids to have a better life than we did. We think that if they learn English, it's going to be better for them.'" ■

FAMILIES FIRST

A Willamette Valley preschool program strengthens parents' role in children's education

by Michael Sedlak

GERVAIS, Oregon—"*¡Buenas noches!* Good evening!" Carolyn Espinoza smiles at the 75 mostly Hispanic parents clustered around a dozen tables in the Gervais Elementary School cafeteria. Outside, a mid-December rain drenches the fields and farms surrounding the rural school, but inside the brightly lit room, laughter and chatter drown Espinoza's words. Standing in the middle of the assemblage, she repeats her greeting, first in Spanish, then in English. After weeks of wondering whether anyone will show up at the premiere Families First science fair, resource teacher Espinoza is clearly pleased at the turnout.

For Families First, a program of Oregon's Marion (County) Education Service District (ESD), the science fair is yet another successful effort to involve Hispanic parents in the culturally appropriate education of their children. Since 1977, the Marion ESD has offered a preschool program primarily for Hispanic residents of the Willamette Valley. "Our philosophy," says Tina Garcia, program coordinator, "is to provide parents with the belief, support, and reinforcement that they are their children's most influential educator and to instill in parents and children a pride in their cultural heritage."

With $275,000 in federal migrant-education funds, Families First provides four bilingual instructional assistants, a resource teacher-parent trainer, a home-school liaison, and a part-time program coordinator. Together, the team serves 163 preschoolers from about 130 families.

"Our primary objectives," says Garcia, "are to instill in parents the belief that what they have to offer their children is monumental; to create bicultural parent classes where parents are comfortable asking questions; and to emphasize that home is the most natural place for a child to learn —from learning how to classify by helping sort laundry to adding language richness by talking about the reasons colors change on the leaves they see on a drive to town."

Families First has three basic elements:

- Parent meetings
- Adult literacy requirements
- In-home, Spanish-language preschool

In addition, Families First collaborates with medical agencies to offer extensive health screening to identify and correct health problems of children in the program.

TWICE A MONTH, DOZENS OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS GATHER at the Gervais Elementary School for parent meetings. Bilingual sessions are held in the early evening and repeated the following morning, allowing flexibility for parents who work days or nights. Meetings feature presentations on topics such as the importance of reading to children or the basics of positive discipline. Sometimes, guests from the community speak—police officers, firefighters, health officials, or local elementary school principals. When possible, community representatives are Hispanic and/or bilingual. An employment official may discuss how to conduct a job search; a housing representative may talk about how to access subsidized homes. The aim is to demystify the system and help parents access services or feel comfortable in the elementary school their preschooler will attend. Parents are surveyed to determine topics of interest.

Families First also has special nights for fathers and children, featuring such activities as constructing a simple bird feeder or taking a field trip to a local swimming pool. Talent sharing is another popular activity. Parents may bring samples of favorite recipes or demonstrate how to change a tire or cut hair.

"One mother who felt like she didn't have any talent to demonstrate had decorated her home with beautiful hand embroidery," recalls Elvira Arce, a Families First instructional assistant. "I admired it during a home visit, and she said she'd done it herself. She shared it during the talent show, and you should have seen her face. Everybody went 'Wow!' and her self-esteem went way up. Even though she had had no formal education, she had a talent that others admired. And it made her child feel good to see how much everyone admired Mom."

Besides attending the twice-monthly meetings, one member of each family is required, as a condition of participation in the program, to take an adult literacy or GED class or other continuing education that will support and further develop the strength of the family. Instructional assistants help adults enroll. Families First developers believe that such classes help the parents become involved in the community, sets them as role models for their children, and instills pride in parents as they complete program components.

THE YELLOW MINIBUS NAVIGATES CAREFULLY DOWN THE GRAVEL DRIVEWAY to a tidy home where four-year-old Horacio marches out, arms swinging. His mother, holding a diapered infant, follows and exchanges pleasantries with Elvira Arce, the instructional assistant who also serves as bus driver. (Bus service helps families that can't provide transportation and gives youngsters a chance to learn bus safety.) After picking up four more youngsters—and talking with parents at each stop—Arce parks in front of a well-kept apartment where two tiny faces appear at the window. The apartment door flies open, and Arce shepherds in the fledglings from the bus. With the help of adults in the home, the group will spend the next two hours singing, counting, identifying colors, and undertaking other developmentally appropriate activities—all in Spanish.

While some parents initially object to Spanish education, language experts point out several reasons for learning first in the native language. For one, if young children learn English, they tend not to maintain or develop the language spoken at home, even if it is the only one their parents know. The result may be to jeopardize the parent-child relationship.

Another concern is that a child may learn only functional English. Before the age of five, children have not learned the complexity of language and have not learned abstract thought and the interaction between thinking and language. If a second language supersedes the native language too early, the youngster may gain only a functional command of the second language and enter school behind in development of both languages. As language complexity increases in higher grades, forming the basis for more challenging reading and writing tasks, middle school and high school students may find themselves unable to keep up. By first learning all the contextual richness of the native language, the child increases her or his command of the second language.

The Families First in-home preschool gives parents some direct experience with activities they can do with children in the home and helps prepare youngsters for their public school experience. Class size is kept to 10 or fewer children, who attend class two days every other week for two-hour sessions in the morning or afternoon. Each instructional assistant works with a total of 40 youngsters. Classes are held in different homes each week, and a parent or the child's caregiver participates in the activities. On alternate weeks, children work on take-home packets. Activities are carefully gauged to the developmental level of preschool children.

Instructional assistants take classes in developmentally appropriate education and return each year for three hours of continuing education on the topic. That helps them explain to parents the reasons behind what looks like play—that learning fine motor skills by stacking or lacing can help with writing later.

"If parents don't know this," says Arce, "they don't always see the value of the preschool activities." Parents are carefully drawn into the activities. Early in the year or on a first visit to a home, parents may help with minor tasks like supervising small groups of youngsters practicing cutting or gluing. Later, instructional assistants may ask parents to lead two or three children around the room identifying colors or shapes. Parents learn to ask open-ended questions along with strategies for incorporating what is being taught with day-to-day activities such as asking a child to count out five plates at dinnertime or patting out practice tortillas with a bit of scrap dough.

Equally important is culturally appropriate education. When Arce leads her flock into the house, she introduces each child to the grandfather and aunt who will help that day. Each child solemnly shakes hands with the adults.

"In Latino cultures," Garcia explains, "respect for elders is very important."

The aim of culturally appropriate education, according to a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*, is to enable every child to construct a knowledgeable and confident self-identity; to develop comfortable, empathetic, and just interaction with diversity; and to develop critical thinking and the skills to stand up for themselves in the face of injustice.

One of the strongest arguments for including culturally relevant education is to enhance a child's self-esteem. Learning is profoundly social and embedded in the home culture. While the dominant culture in most U.S. schools values logic and verbal skills, other cultures—while valuing language—may also emphasize reflection, with the result that speedy answers to questions are not considered socially acceptable.

"Everyone needs to feel psychologically safe and that their culture, their way of doing things, is valued and respected," says Dr. Rebecca Novick, who specializes in early childhood education at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. "A school's values and expectations can be so different from a child's culture that bridging that gap can be crucial to the child's success. Culturally relevant education does that by emphasizing shared experience."

But it's important to seamlessly incorporate culturally appropriate education rather than tacking it on as an afterthought—a practice dubbed "tourist multiculturism" by some for its emphasis on surface differences, such as holidays, between cultures. Ideas for genuinely incorporating multiculturism in the classroom include:

- Having dolls of different colors and storybooks in different languages
- Learning a few words in the child's language
- Using bilingual signs around the classroom
- Creating a bulletin board or class book for photographs of every student's family and captions describing the people and their relationships or activities
- Using contextual cues, such as

standing by the door when telling children to line up at the door
• Asking a child the Spanish word or phrase to express something
• Inviting Hispanic members of the community into the classroom to talk about their culture, not just obvious differences such as food, but also history and traditions

"One of the most important first steps for any of us," says Novick, "is to examine our own biases." Allowing and encouraging kids to talk about cultural differences and similarities—not minimizing the differences—is also important. If a child talks about the difference in skin color, talk about the differences in skin, hair color, eye color, height, weight, and other obvious physical differences. "The goal of culturally relevant teaching," Novick stresses, "is for a child to be fluent and comfortable in both cultures and to move back and forth easily between the two."

THE PRESCHOOL IS OFTEN THE SELLING POINT when parents are deciding whether to get involved with the Families First program. Once drawn in, however, many parents see the value of required parent meetings and literacy classes and enjoy participating. Families First found that even though the program provided refreshments for parent meetings, parents began bringing homemade goodies to show their appreciation for all they were learning.

"I like the parent meetings," says Letisia Reyes, mother of two youngsters in the program. "It's important to see what your kids are learning, and it's very important to get involved with our kids and hear what the teachers have to tell us. I learn a lot."

The offer of free preschool is a strong inducement for parents to get involved, but there are other ways to engage parents of any age child. The first step is to understand an important cultural difference. "We have to help (Hispanic) parents learn our educational system," says Espinoza, who taught for several years in Mexico. There, she says, parents considered the teacher and, by extension, the school to be the absolute authority. "I was a goddess," she says.

Espinoza believes that many Hispanic parents, even if they've lived for years in the United States, bring that assumption to the U.S. educational system, not realizing that their participation is expected and crucial to their child's success. Schools, too, she says, need educating about the differences in cultures. They need to understand that while Hispanic parents may not immediately become involved in their child's education, they still are concerned and interested. They may assume their participation would be seen as an attempt to usurp the school's role as sole educator. Helping them get involved shows them how important and valued their contributions are.

"All cultures value education," says Espinoza. "We have to help parents see that here they need to be involved in their child's education."

In addition to unfamiliarity with the U.S. school culture, Hispanic parents may feel shy about volunteering because of their own lack of education or limited English skills. The first step may be to reach out to those parents personally, ideally with a school staff member who is bilingual.

"If you want parents in the classroom," says Garcia, "you must meet them at the level they are on. Often families believe they have nothing to offer because they don't speak English. If they can't read English, ask them to share stories from their childhood. Or ask them to share a unique talent like ceramics or art or how to make tortillas. Start from the premise that parents have something valuable to offer, and approach them as equals. If you do that, you will attract parents."

Arce suggested that teachers may need to phone parents individually to invite them to an after-school or evening meeting. They also may need to meet in the student's home to discuss with parents the importance of being involved in their child's education and to talk about ways they might feel comfortable helping. Teachers might suggest helping after school or in the family home to prepare supplies for activities later in the week, supervising on the playground, or helping on field trips.

Arranging carpooling or offering rides helps overcome transportation problems, and offering free child care at the meeting site resolves child-care dilemmas. Parents can rotate child-care duties, or parents not involved in the meeting may serve as volunteers.

With nearly two decades in the community, the Marion ESD is widely known for its Hispanic education programs. Still, outreach efforts continue. Staff members are part of the Hispanic community and frequently hear about prospective participants in informal ways. The program also relies on referrals from schools, local agencies involved in the Hispanic community, the county health department, and other parents. "It's not a once- or twice-a-year thing," says Espinoza. "We are constantly looking for participants."

Innovation is a constant theme with Families First. This year the program added a piece to help families make the transition to public schools. Each instructional assistant is mentoring one-to-one with parents whose children will be old enough for kindergarten the following year. With the help of the assistant, the parent meets with people in the school such as the principal, school secretary, kindergarten teachers, and bilingual staff, and compiles the information in a directory for personal use. In addition, the parent and instructor meet twice each month to talk about issues or problems. And Families First works with the child's prospective school to discuss transition issues.

Flexible, personal, innovative, and culturally sensitive—Families First lives up to its name. "Kindergarten teachers say these kids are prepared, ready for school with the skills they need to fit in and move along," says Espinoza. "And for parents it gives them a lot of useful information, accustoms them to going to school meetings, and gives them the self-confidence they need to get involved in school. Families First is making a tremendous difference."

Families First is producing a program video scheduled for release in April. For information, contact Families First, Marion ESD, 3400 Portland Road N.E., Salem, Oregon 97303, or call (503) 588-5361. The publication Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children *is available from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1426.*

Melissa Steineger is a freelance writer who lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

A Washington college builds a bilingual teaching force

By Matthew Heagle

WENATCHEE, Washington— Below the multihued hills of Central Washington, Chelan County's orchards sleep quietly in December. The frosted winter branches of apple, pear, and cherry trees rise and spread like webs of crystal against a backdrop of oxidic red.

For decades, the fruits of these endless rows of trees have brought migratory laborers, mostly Hispanic, to the Wenatchee, Columbia, and Yakima valleys for the harvest. Once, those farmworkers moved on at harvest's end. While many still migrate with the seasons, others are settling into permanent jobs in communities up and down the valleys—Wenatchee and Wapato, Sunnyside and Pateros, Zillah and Brewster. As those families have settled, area schools have seen their Hispanic enrollments increase dramatically.

"One of the problems for Central Washington's school districts is that as the number of Hispanic students has increased over the years, we haven't had Hispanic teachers coming in at the same rate," says Dr. Ed Rousculp, chair of the department of undergraduate education at Heritage College in Toppenish, a few miles southeast of Yakima. In the past, he says, bilingual and bicultural teachers frequently were hired from Texas and other states, but lacking family ties and roots in the community, they seldom stayed.

The need for Spanish-speaking teachers in Central Washington's school districts was nearing crisis proportions in 1993. That's when the North Central Educational Service District (ESD), with financial support from the state education department, approached Heritage College for help in finding and certifying bilingual paraprofessionals in a teacher-training program called the Priority Hispanic Certification Program. The aim of the project was to certify paraprofessionals—parapros—who were already working in the schools as teacher's aides. This new cadre of educators would help fill the acute need for bilingual teachers in rural schools, where Hispanic children often struggle and frequently fail without help in overcoming language and cultural barriers.

Heritage College put out a call among Central Washington's school districts for bilingual paraprofessionals with an associate's degree or its equivalent who were interested in earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education along with an endorsement in bilingual education. When that original call didn't turn up enough qualified parapros, the college ran an ad in *El Mundo*, a local Spanish-language newspaper, and loosened the requirements to broaden the pool of applicants.

ONE RECENT DECEMBER SATURDAY, the 13 men and women who eventually enrolled in the program gather in the library in Wenatchee's Foothills Middle School. Despite the cold and grey outside, instructor Millie Watkins and her class are having a festive day. It's the last class of the quarter for Watkins' bilingual students. They have worked hard, and today they joke and laugh, reviewing what they've learned and taking stock of the circumstances that brought them to this classroom and, for several, to this country, some from as far away as Guatemala and Ecuador.

"I came to the USA following a dream to learn the English language," says Alfonso Lopez, a 33-year-old from Mexico who taught elementary school for five years before moving to the United States. "I did other jobs here—working in orchards and on a cattle ranch— but one day I decided to come back to school when I heard about this program."

For most of these students, 20 percent of tuition comes from the grant, and 40 percent comes from the school districts or education agencies that employ them. The balance is made up from various other financial-aid sources and from the students themselves, most of whom work full-time.

Lopez expresses his gratitude to Heritage for a program that is structured around the realities of working life. "We take classes on weekends," he says, " which is what we needed."

Although he had been a teacher in Mexico for five years, Lopez could not automatically become a professional teacher when he moved to the United States, even if he had been bilingual at the time. (Because a number of the program participants lacked English skills when they began, linguistic assistance was built into the program). As Watkins points out, the requirements for teacher certification differ greatly between the United States and Mexico, and transfer of certification is not automatic, no matter how much experience a teacher has.

"We're taking a skill that they already possess and building it into the American education system," says Watkins, who besides being an instructor is migrant education supervisor at the North Central ESD. "They already know what teaching is all about."

Lopez, who had earned a master's degree in social science from the Escuela Normal Superior de Oaxaca, was working as a manager on a cattle ranch in Ellensburg when he saw the newspaper ad. His original goal in coming to America had been to learn English so that he could teach a foreign language back home. But once he got here, he couldn't afford to attend classes. When he heard about the Priority program, Lopez quit his job and moved with his wife and two children to Wenatchee.

Not only was he accepted into the program, but he quickly landed a job as a teacher's aide at Wenatchee's Lincoln Elementary School, whose enrollment is nearly 45 percent percent Hispanic. Though Lopez and his classmates won't finish their two-and-a-half-year program until this summer, another Wenatchee school, Lewis

and Clark Elementary—with 25 percent Hispanic students and in desperate need of a full-time bilingual teacher—has already offered him a teaching position.

Prospects look excellent for his classmates, too. "Administrators regularly call and ask 'when will those students be finished?'" says Rousculp.

Gioconda Jackson had been studying marketing when she left her native Ecuador to join her sister in Wenatchee, where she planned to finish her degree. Teaching had not been her goal, but, she says: "I saw kids who came from Mexico and knew nothing about English. I felt so sorry for them because I could see myself in them. So I put my marketing career aside and began to think about becoming a teacher."

The 32-year-old Jackson has been working toward her associate of arts degree and teacher certification while working for Watkins at the ESD. "It's been one of the biggest jobs of my life to go to class during my lunch hour to get my AA, and then to the school every weekend to get my certification," she says. "But I think it's worth it."

Jackson believes that the difficulty of being a Hispanic child in America's schools is underestimated. "Sometimes, we don't realize how much culture shock there is when kids move to the United States," she says. "Many people believe they just have to deal with the language. It's not true."

Jackson says children are under intense pressure not only to learn English and academic content but also to rapidly adapt to an alien culture. "It's more than just understanding English: It's understanding the way people live," asserts Jackson, who says her ability to empathize will be an asset. "I can understand their fears."

The Priority Hispanic Certification Program's mission of helping language-minority children ties in closely with the college's founding philosophy. Heritage, which grew out of a Native American outreach program of Fort Wright, a small Catholic liberal arts college in Spokane, is dedicated to bringing quality higher education to "diverse populations" in rural areas. Since its founding 14 years ago, the college has focused on addressing the educational needs of Central Washington adults who, because they are bound by work and family responsibilities to a rural locale, would otherwise be unable to pursue quality higher education. Since 1982, when 85 students attended classes in a caretaker's cottage or under a sycamore tree, the college has grown to serve more than 1,000 student at its 20 acres in Toppenish and at a satellite campus at Omak. Academic offerings include four master's programs in education.

DESPITE "GROWING UP," HERITAGE HAS RETAINED ITS PRIME DIRECTIVE. Of about 650 undergraduate students, more than half at the Toppenish campus are people of color: about 30 percent Hispanic and 20 percent Native American. Most are the first in their family to attend college. More than half fall below the poverty level. Many are farmworkers and single mothers. Women make up 70 percent of the student body, whose average age is 33.

To accommodate its student body, Heritage offers classes in many communities, often in the evening or on the weekend. On the same December Saturday that Millie Watkins meets with her Priority students in Wenatchee, for example, Dr. Yolanda Jaini, director of complex instruction at Heritage, is teaching an English as a Second Language (ESL) course across the Columbia River in East Wenatchee. The 10 graduate students are learning how to be innovators in conveying basic concepts to children whose English is weak or nonexistent. They experiment with ways of delivering instructions, often relying on visual presentations such as diagrams on computer screens. Jaini rarely lectures, more often giving her students key concepts and acting as a facilitator to draw from them the meaning and application of their lessons. During the process of encouraging students to find their own way through instruction—a method Jaini calls "scaffolding"—students receive support from the instructor, but only when they get stuck and only as much as they need to proceed independently. In this way, Jaini says, students assume more responsibility for their learning.

These classes, in which students learn from each other instead of receiving knowledge solely from the instructor, help build what Heritage and other progressive educational institutions call "learning communities." Students in a common field constitute "cohorts" or "cadres" that will go through the entire program together, forming networks that will extend beyond their education into their careers.

The Priority program and the regular curriculum at Heritage may have different immediate goals, but both will benefit children whose first or only language is something other than English. The graduate students' training in ESL is not finished once they complete the ESL class. Rather, effective methods of teaching language-minority students will be a recurring theme and a very substantial part of their education at Heritage, Jaini says.

DEALING WITH LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY in schoolchildren would not be such a big concern at Heritage if the solution were simply a matter of teaching English better or faster. But the issue goes much deeper than vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax, according to Dr. Pat Whitfield, dean of the division of education and psychology at Heritage. "Teachers need to be looking at the whole child and not just how well he or she speaks English," she says. "The opportunity to read and write in their own language is what will enable them to excel later on. Every child has a culture that has worth. If a child's frame of reference is not the same as ours, we have to recognize what that frame of reference is."

Heritage has grown quickly, a fact that speaks to the ongoing needs of the communities it serves. Rousculp and Watkins would like to see the Priority program continue and certify another group of bilingual teachers. But for that to happen, a new base source of funding would have to be identified. Despite the continued need, Rousculp wants to be sure that by the time work is begun on funding another group of students, there will be a large and highly qualified pool of parapros to recruit. So for now, Alfonso Lopez, Gioconda Jackson, and their fellow students are a unique graduating class.

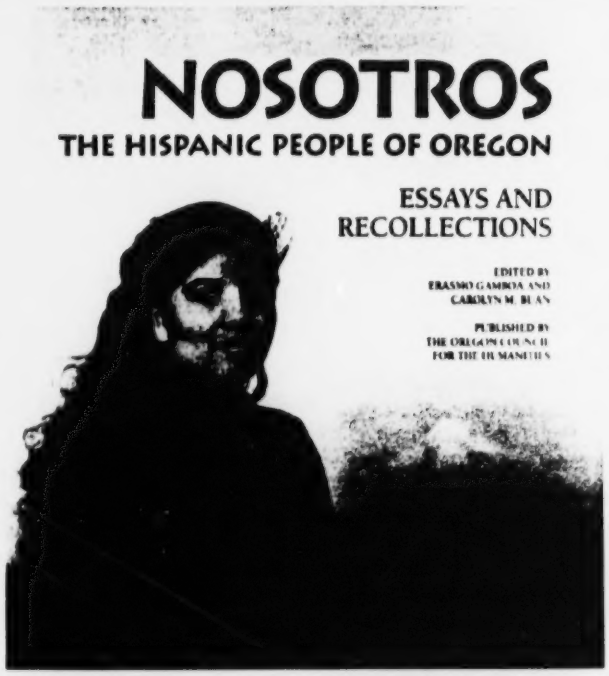
"It's a dream we will keep forever," says Jackson. "We will always have this."

Matthew Fleagle is a freelance writer who lives and works in Seattle, Washington. ■

THE HISPANIC PRESENCE IN THE NORTHWEST DATES BACK SEVERAL CENTURIES to the 1500s when Spanish mariners began exploring and mapping the Pacific coast. A new book from the Oregon Council for the Humanities records Hispanics' far-reaching contributions to the social and economic history of Oregon, from those early explorations through the present day. Editors Erasmo Gamboa and Carolyn Buan write: "The Hispanic people of Oregon comprise a large, complex, and ongoing community that all Oregonians should better understand. Bilingual and multicultural, with roots in many other countries, theirs is now an Oregon story, extending from the earliest period of exploration and discovery to the present day."

Richly illustrated with photos and drawings, *Nosotros: The Hispanic People of Oregon* recounts the adventures of the early Spanish explorers and then goes on to tell the little-known story of the *vaqueros*—skilled Hispanic horsemen who helped establish the cattle ranches of Oregon's high desert in the 1800s. It describes the contribution of experienced Mexican mule-packers who brought food and supplies through the rugged territory to miners and other 19th-century settlers. It tells of the *braceros*—the Mexican farmworkers who worked under contract to the U.S. government to filt labor shortages during World War II.

The book then moves on to the struggles of migrant workers, from the Mexican-American civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s to the national and state legislative reforms of the 1980s. It discusses social policy; Spanish language rights and law; and Hispanic businesses, arts, and festivals. Profiles of Hispanic Oregonians give faces and names to the larger history.



"*Nosotros* presents a broad cultural tapestry of Oregon's Hispanic people, telling the story of our significant contributions to the quality of life in this state," says Felipe Veloz, past chair of the Oregon State Board of Education. "It is must reading for students and the general public."

Nosotros is available from the Oregon Council for the Humanities, 812 S.W. Washington Street, Suite 225, Portland, Oregon 97205. The cost is $16.95 if purchased at the council office and $18.95 if ordered by mail. The book is also available in bookstores for $21.95. Teachers may receive discounts for books purchased in quantity for classroom use. For more information, call (503) 241-0543.

SIX HISPANIC STUDENTS IN HERMISTON, under the direction of videomaker Brian Lindstrom, have produced an eight-minute documentary capturing the spirit of Eastern Oregon's Mexican-American community as embodied in custom and culture. The video, *I Feel Mexican Even Though I Was Born Here*, takes viewers into homes, businesses, and studios for an intimate introduction to Hermiston's Hispanic residents. As the camera rolls, a baker prepares traditional breads and pastries. Homemakers cook enchiladas. A potter crafts bowls of clay. A painter, a dance troupe, and a singer demonstrate their arts. A priest talks about an important religious festival. A woman sews a traditional Mexican dress. Another crafts a piñata.

"Today, the rhythms, the sounds, the celebrations, the foods, the arts, and the language of the Mexican people are very much a part of life in Hermiston," the student narrator tells viewers.

The video came about through the collaborative efforts of the Northwest Film Center, the Oregon Folk Arts Program, and the Hermiston School District. It is a product of the film center's statewide Video/Filmmaker-in-Schools program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Oregon Arts Commission.

The video can be obtained from the Portland Art Museum's Northwest Film Center by calling (503) 221-1156 and asking for the education outreach coordinator. The video also can be obtained from the Oregon Folk Arts Program housed at the Oregon Historical Society. For information, call (503) 306-5292.

AN INFORMATION PACKET BRIMMING WITH VALUABLE RESOURCE LEADS is available from the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. Noting that the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 gives greater emphasis to "integrated and innovative programs that are effective in educating linguistically and culturally diverse students," the packet offers information on model programs that can help educators design and implement programs in their schools.

Among the items included are:

- Ordering information on projects of the Title VII (bilingual/ESL education) Academic Excellence Program. The projects demonstrate exemplary models for English language development; have proven to be effective; and are transportable and easily implemented in a wide variety of educational settings.
- Ordering information for *An Idea Book: Implementing Schoolwide Projects* (Title I).
- An overview and ordering information for *The Education of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: Effective Instructional Practices.*

To order the free *Information Packet: Effective Program Models*, compiled by Barbara Silcox and Kris Anstrom, call (800) 321-NCBE.

THE LAW IS CLEAR: SCHOOLS MUST GIVE LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS EQUAL ACCESS TO LEARNING. Merely seating a child in the classroom is a meaningless gesture if the child can't comprehend what's being taught, the Supreme Court ruled two decades ago in the landmark case *Lau vs. Nichols*.

But the hows of equal access have been left up to the schools. The Supreme Court offered some guidance in its 1981 decision in *Castaneda vs. Pickard*, ruling that a district's alternative language program must meet three tests:
(1) Is it based on an educational theory recognized as sound by at least some experts in the field?
(2) Are the programs and practices, including resources and personnel, reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively?
(3) Does the district evaluate its program and make adjustments where needed to ensure language barriers are actually being overcome?

Still, there is no court mandate for choosing one program over another. As long as the program is "recognized as sound by at least some experts," it's acceptable. But expert opinion is mixed, and is further confounded by politics. The nation's current anti-immigrant climate—reinforced by the vocal and emotional English-only movement—makes it tough to objectively sort through the arguments, which tend to come from two camps: bilingual education advocates on one hand and English-language immersion advocates on the other. If a district opts for bilingual instruction, for example, how does it weigh the relative merits of transitional bilingual education and bilingual-bicultural maintenance, or make even finer distinctions between, say, early-exit and late-exit transitional bilingual programs?

Until recently, the research base on models for second-language acquisition added more confusion than clarity. Some studies on immersion programs, for instance, have focused on "Canadian-style immersion," which actually has a bilingual component and therefore can't be classified as pure immersion. Other studies have produced inconsistent or even contradictory findings that lend themselves to conflicting conclusions depending on who interprets the data.

Despite the sometimes-inconclusive data, a number of recent studies and syntheses by authoritative researchers and linguists have made solid findings in favor of teaching academic content in children's first language. There is a growing body of evidence to support the view that bilingual education models—particularly the "late-exit transitional," "bilingual-bicultural maintenance," and "developmental bilingual" models—hold the most promise for teaching English while letting language-minority kids catch up to their native-English peers.

THERE IS ONE POINT ON WHICH ALMOST EVERYONE AGREES: Submersion—tossing a non-English-speaking child into an English-only classroom without any assistance or accommodation for the language barrier—doesn't work and is unacceptable. In the "sink-or-swim" approach, most kids sink. But that's where agreement ends. Debate swirls around such questions as, Should language-minority children be taught in their first language? If so, how often and how long? What role should schools play in preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of immigrant students? Can children who receive no instruction in their first language catch up and compete with their native English-speaking classmates?

Arguing that a school's goal should be to Americanize and acculturate immigrant children as quickly as possible, opponents of bilingual education contend that teaching children in their first language only delays the acquisition of English and postpones the day when they can join their peers in the mainstream classroom. "How years of being taught mostly in Korean, Spanish, or Portugese can produce rapid and effective learning of English is still a mystery and, in practice, an illusion," says one of bilingual education's most outspoken critics, Rosalie Pedalino Porter of the READ Institute, in an *Education Week* commentary published May 18, 1994.

The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) takes exception to statements which, like Porter's, suggest that students in bilingual programs are taught "mostly" in their first language. This "often-heard claim is wholly refuted" by two U.S. Department of Education studies (including the Ramirez study discussed below) validated by the National Academy of Sciences, NABE asserts in its 1995 publication *Bilingual Education: Separating Fact from Fiction*. The studies found that transitional bilingual programs, where the goal is to move the child as quickly as possible into all-English classes, used English 65 percent of the time in kindergarten and, by fourth grade, 97 percent of the time. Even in developmental bilingual programs, where the goal is fluency in both languages, English was used more than half the time after second grade, the studies found.

Deep proficiency in a second language takes far longer to attain than surface fluency, researchers are finding. While it is true that Spanish-speaking and other immigrant children can pick up rudimentary English skills fast, the complexity of lunchroom or playground language doesn't approach the complexity of classroom language. "Many minority students can develop a relatively high degree of English communicative skills within about two years of exposure to English-speaking peers, television, and schooling," says Jim Cummins in *Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy* published by College Hill Press in 1984. "However, it is not valid to extrapolate from minority students' face-to-face conversational fluency to their overall proficiency in English.... A considerably longer period of time is required to learn sufficient English to perform at the same level in academic tasks as native English speakers than is usually required to converse fluently in face-to-face situations."

The speedy "Berlitz" approach to language instruction may equip the learner with linguistic survival skills, but it hardly prepares her to write a paper, for example, on the symbolism of the white whale in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, NABE notes. Such a paper requires complex cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation that are not necessary for ordering a Big Mac but are critical to school success.

Examining the school records of 42,000 language-minority students around the United States, researchers Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas of George Mason University have found that in schools giving all-English instruction, students take five to 10 years to reach grade-level norms in English: seven to 10 years if they had no schooling in their native country, and five to seven years if they had some schooling (at least two or three

years) before coming to the United States. In contrast, students schooled bilingually in the United States typically reach and surpass native speakers' performance after four to seven years.

"Our data show that extensive cognitive and academic development in students' first language is crucial to second-language academic success," the researchers write in "Second-Language Acquisition for School: Academic, Cognitive, Sociocultural, and Linguistic Processes" published in the *Georgetown University Round Table Proceedings* in December 1995. "Contrary to the popular idea that it takes a motivated student a short time to acquire a second language, our studies examining immigrants and language-minority students in many different regions of the U.S. and with many background characteristics have found that four to 12 years of second-language development are needed for the most advantaged students to reach deep academic proficiency and compete successfully with native speakers."

This recent study backs up findings of an earlier study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education to weigh the relative effectiveness of three program models for teaching Spanish-speaking students:

- Structured English immersion—All instruction is in English, with modifications in vocabulary and pacing so that academic subjects will be understood
- Early-exit transitional bilingual—Spanish is used for part of the day in grades K-2, and students are mainstreamed by the end of second grade
- Late-exit transitional bilingual—Spanish literacy is developed before introducing English literacy, and once English is initiated, about half of the instructional day is devoted to each language through sixth grade

Dubbed the "Ramirez study" for lead researcher J. David Ramirez of R.T. International, the study followed more than 2,000 students for four years, gathering information on child, family, classroom, teacher, school, district, and community. The data, published in 1991, documented that students need six or more years to learn a second language, Ramirez asserts in his executive summary, published in *Bilingual Research Journal*, Winter/Spring 1992. The data also lend support to the notion that the more instruction children get in their first language, the better they perform in their second.

Ramirez found that while children in all-English and bilingual programs showed comparable performance during the early elementary grades, the students in immersion and early-exit bilingual programs began lagging behind in later grades. Writes Ramirez: "Providing substantial instruction in the primary language appears to help LEP [limited-English-proficient] students catch up to their English-speaking peers in mainstream classrooms in English language, reading, and mathematics. In contrast, providing all instruction in English or with modest amounts of primary language instruction does not appear to help LEP students catch up to the norming population."

Collier and Thomas draw similar conclusions from their study: "From fourth grade on through middle school and high school, when the academic and cognitive demands of the curriculum increase rapidly with each succeeding year, students with little or no academic and cognitive development in their first language do less and less well as they move into the upper grades."

THE RAMIREZ AND COLLIER/THOMAS STUDIES REINFORCE EARLIER FINDINGS of Jim Cummins, who reported in the early 1980s that immigrant students who arrived in Canada at age six or seven took an average of five to seven years to match their English-speaking peers in English verbal and academic skills. Notes Cummins: "The fact that immigrant students require, on the average, five to seven years to approach grade norms in L2 [second-language] academic skills, yet show peer-appropriate L2 conversational skills within about two years of arrival, suggests that conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency need to be distinguished."

For one thing, academic tasks are often abstract and removed from the student's immediate surroundings or experiences. Cummins makes a distinction between "context-embedded" and "disembedded" thought. The cues students use to make sense of talk—the sights and sounds and signals that provide context for spoken language—are often reduced in the academic environment, he notes.

Cummins, Collier, and others have argued that the higher-order thinking skills and deeper conceptual abilities students need as they progress in school are best acquired in the child's first language. "With each succeeding grade, academic work (in language arts, math, science, and social studies) gets cognitively more complex," Collier writes. "Academic knowledge and conceptual development transfer from first language to second language; thus, it is more efficient to develop academic work through students' first language, while teaching second language during other periods of the school day through meaningful academic content.

"In early decades in the U.S.," she continues, "we emphasized teaching second language as the first step, and postponed the teaching of academics. Research has shown us that postponing or interrupting academic development in first and second languages is likely to produce academic failure."

Besides allowing language-minority students to develop deeper cognitive skills in their first language, then, bilingual instruction lets students advance quickly in math, science, history, and other academic subjects at the same time that they are mastering English. In a 1994 report to the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, the U.S. General Accounting Office supports this notion, saying, "Bilingual instruction allows for more detailed and richer coverage of academic subjects because it facilitates a faster pace and allows more examples to be used."

BILINGUAL EDUCATION CAN TAKE MANY SHAPES. It can be a short-term tool for moving students quickly into mainstream classrooms, as in the "early-exit transitional" programs studied by Ramirez where second-language instruction is phased out by third grade. The "late-exit" model—which retains second-language instruction through sixth grade and which Ramirez found to be more effective than early-exit—is also a transitional approach, with an emphasis on replacing students' first language with their second. But late-exit models come closer to developmental bilingual and bilingual-bicultural maintenance models, which seek to retain and build upon the child's first language while developing the second.

In distinguishing between developmental/maintenance and

transitional models, some researchers note that one approach is "additive," the other "subtractive." A number of educators and linguists have pointed out the irony of supplanting the language skills children bring to school. Paraphrasing Professor Mary Ashworth of the University of British Columbia, Jim Cummins notes in *Empowering Minority Students* published by the California Association for Bilingual Education in 1989: "The roots of the term education imply drawing out children's potential, making them more than they were; however, when children come to school fluent in their primary language and they leave school monolingual in English, then our schools have negated the meaning of the term education because they have made children less than they were."

It is around this issue—the role schools should play in preserving and nurturing children's language and cultural identity—that the bilingual debate ultimately turns. Critic Rosalie Pedalino Porter argues that schools' job is to instill English skills, not preserve culture. "Let us not confuse the private freedom to use any language at home and keep any cultural traditions, which rights we all have, with the priorities and responsibilities of public education," she writes. "Families or groups that choose to retain language and culture may promote after-school programs or private language schools, but such preservation cannot be a responsibility of the public schools with their limited resources and broader responsibilities."

Such arguments, however, ignore what we know: that cultural identity is closely linked to self-esteem, and self-esteem is tied to academic achievement. Another link that is clearly established in the research literature is the connection between parental involvement and student outcomes. Without honoring a child's language and culture, schools cannot hope to draw language-minority parents into the educational process, and without such involvement, children's chances for success diminish. Notes Cummins: "There is considerable evidence that academic progress is facilitated by means of programs that strongly reinforce students' cultural identity."

THE SPOKEN AND UNSPOKEN MESSAGES EDUCATORS COMMUNICATE to children about the value of their language and their culture are a critical part of what Virginia Collier terms the "sociocultural processes" that affect how well children learn and, ultimately, how far they go in school and beyond. Sociocultural processes include such factors as students' self-esteem, the instructional milieu (for instance, is it cooperative or competitive?), majority-minority relations in the school, and prejudice in the community.

Notes Collier: "Sociocultural processes strongly influence, in both positive and negative ways, students' access to cognitive, academic, and language development. It is crucial that educators provide a socioculturally supportive school environment that allows natural language, academic, and cognitive development to happen."

The instructional milieu is one sociocultural factor that teachers can affect directly. There is strong evidence that second-language students thrive in classrooms where "interactive/experiential approaches to pedagogy" are the norm, in Cummins' words. Significantly, these practices—whole language, cooperative learning, discovery learning, problem solving—are the same practices that educational researchers are finding work best with all children. But too often, minority-language students instead wind up on unchallenging, remedial tracks that present a watered-down curriculum with a fill-in-the-blanks approach.

Collier and Thomas distinguish between what they call "traditional" and "current" methods of language teaching.

"Students do less well in programs that focus on discrete units of language taught in a structured, sequenced curriculum with the learner treated as a passive recipient of knowledge," they say in their report *Research Summary of Study in Progress: Results as of September 1995*. "Students achieve significantly better in programs that teach language through cognitively complex academic content in math, science, social studies, and literature, taught through problem-solving, discovery learning in highly interactive classroom activities. ESL pull-out in the early grades, taught traditionally, is the least successful program model for students' long-term success."

Collier and Thomas go on to note that certain program characteristics can make a "significant difference" in academic achievement for students entering U.S. schools at the secondary level when first-language instructional support cannot be provided. They are: teaching second language through academic content; teaching learning strategies that develop thinking skills and problem-solving abilities; and supporting continuous staff development with an emphasis on activation of students' prior knowledge, respect for students' home language and culture, intense and meaningful cognitive/academic development, and ongoing assessment using multiple measures.

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT SHOULD BE THE LONG-TERM GOAL OF ANY PROGRAM for language-minority students, in Cummins' view. "Educators who see their role as adding a second language and cultural affiliation to students' repertoire," he says, "are likely to empower students more than those who see their role as replacing or subtracting students' primary language and culture in the process of teaching English and assimilating students to the dominant culture."

Cummins is careful to note, however, that the "additive orientation" can exist whether or not bilingual instruction is possible or practical. Reinforcing Collier's emphasis on the importance of a supportive sociocultural environment to children's achievement, Cummins says in his article "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention" published by *Harvard Educational Review* in February 1986: "Educators communicate to students and parents in a variety of ways the extent to which students' language and culture is valued within the context of the school. Even within a monolingual school context, powerful messages can be communicated to students regarding the validity and advantages of language development."

NOTE: The research findings of Collier and Thomas summarized in the working paper, Research Summary of Study in Progress: Results as of September 1995, *cited above, can be found in an article to be published this year by the* Bilingual Research Journal. *Also see the article "Second-Language Acquisition for School: Academic, Cognitive, Sociocultural, and Linguistic Processes" in the* Georgetown University Round Table Proceedings, *December 1995.*

—Lee Sherman Caudell

Different Educational Strategies for Instructing Limited-English-Proficient Students

Several basic strategies are used for instructing Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) students. In practice they often are combined in a variety of ways.

Transitional Bilingual Education — An instructional program in which subjects are taught in two languages—English and the native language of LEP students—and English is taught as a second language. Bilingual programs emphasize the development of English-language skills as well as grade promotion and graduation requirements. These programs are designed to enable LEP students to make a transition to an all-English program of instruction while receiving academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent necessary. Transitional bilingual education programs vary in the amount of native language instruction provided and the duration of the program.

Developmental Bilingual Programs — Programs in which native-English-speaking and LEP students receive instruction in both English and the native language of the LEP students, with the goal of bilingual literacy for both groups.

Bilingual-Bicultural Maintenance — A program that uses two languages, the student's primary language and English, as a means of instruction. The instruction builds upon the student's primary language skills and develops and expands the English language skills of each student to enable him or her to achieve competency in both languages.

English as a Second Language — A teaching approach in which LEP students are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of their native language and is usually taught only in specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, the students may be placed in regular (or submersion) instruction, an immersion program, or a bilingual program.

Immersion — A general term for teaching approaches for LEP students that do not involve using a student's native language. Three variations are the following:

Sheltered English (Sheltered Subject Matter Teaching) — A method characterized by the use of simplified vocabulary and sentence structure to facilitate understanding of the regular curriculum for LEP students. Teachers use slower, more concise speech, with increased wait time after posing questions. In addition, teachers make instruction more visual by using "realia" (objects and activities related to real life), manipulatives, pictures, and charts to provide comprehensible (visual/concrete) input.

Structured Immersion — A method that involves teaching in English, but with several differences from submersion: the teacher understands the native language, and students may speak it to the teacher, although the teacher generally answers only in English. Knowledge of English is not assumed, and the curriculum is modified in vocabulary and pacing, so that the academic subjects will be understood. Some programs include some language arts teaching in the native language.

Submersion — Placing LEP students in ordinary classrooms in which English is the language of instruction. Students receive no special programs to help them overcome their language barriers, and their native language is not used in the classroom. Also called "sink or swim," submersion was found unconstitutional in the Supreme Court's decision in *Lau vs. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

SOURCE: *A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts*. U.S. General Accounting Office, January 1994

Linking LEP programs to systemic reform helps ensure inclusion

By Lee Sherman Caudell

IMAGINE A SCHOOL SYSTEM AS AN INTRICATE FABRIC OF PEOPLE, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES. Then consider that in most school systems, language-minority students are woven into the margins of the cloth—if they are woven in at all.

"Programs to address their unique needs tend to be ghettoized—if not physically, then in administrators' attitudes and practices," note Diane August, Kenji Hakuta, and Delia Pompa in *For All Students: Limited English Proficient Students and Goals 2000*, published by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education in 1994. "Large numbers of limited-English-proficient children continue to receive instruction that is substandard to what English speakers receive. This amounts to a two-tiered system of education, with challenging curriculum for some and mediocrity for the rest."

In another paper from the National Clearinghouse, *Implementing Bilingual Programs is Everybody's Business*, Toni Greigo-Jones charges many schools with "housing two schools"—one for language-minority kids, the other for mainstream kids—in one building. The paper, published in 1995, deplores the "isolation" and "lack of connection" this duality creates for language-minority students.

But she and other advocates for language-minority children see promise in what has become the rallying cry of educators, commentators, and policymakers engaged in school improvement: systemic reform. This she defines as a "holistic approach to reform and change, one that involves all stakeholders and affects all aspects of schooling." Returning to the school-system-as-fabric analogy, educational reform can be seen as the process of recreating the cloth. Systemic reform, rather than patching or mending, shuttles each and every thread through the loom anew, leaving no loose strands. Programs for language-minority students, in this all-encompassing approach to school change, aren't tacked on but woven in.

"Reorienting American schools away from old assumptions—that minority children can learn only basic skills and that bilingualism is a handicap to be overcome—will require a comprehensive approach," August and her colleagues insist. "Reform must be systemic in nature."

So far, they add, "the reform movement has generally sidestepped the particular conditions, needs, and strengths of limited-English-proficient children." Systemic reform hinges on the conviction that academic success belongs not only to kids who live on suburban cul-de-sacs, but also to kids who live in gangland tenements. And to kids who live in remote farmhouses. And to kids who can't scrape up the dollar for a school lunch. Systemic reform rests on the belief that educators must hold high expectations not only for children whose parents speak English, but also for children whose parents speak Spanish and Russian and Hmong.

THESE IDEAS—HIGH SIGHTS, SEISMIC CHANGE—underpin two key pieces of federal legislation that are shaping the way states and districts tackle reform and address the needs of language-minority students: the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Goals 2000.

The reauthorized ESEA, the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, reduces fragmented services by letting districts blend some pots of money once earmarked for narrowly defined populations. The beefed-up coordination and combined resources that result when schools link programs for disadvantaged, migrant, and language-minority students, for example, benefit all targeted kids. When services are fragmented, as they too often have been in the past, "resources are dispersed, children's needs are only partially addressed, and no one is held fully accountable," August notes.

The legislation also makes more money and services available for limited-English-proficient children by loosening restrictions on Title I eligibility. Before, limited-English-proficient (LEP) kids couldn't get Title I services (special help for disadvantaged students) if their main educational roadblock was language. Now, they can. The rural Santiam Canyon School District in Oregon, for example, is taking advantage of the new flexibility in federal funding. The district's migrant, bilingual, and Title I staff are engaged in joint planning and resource sharing across programs. After all, Title I Coordinator Monica Lawson observes, "Our kids aren't in separate packages."

At the same time that language-minority students are being brought into the Title I fold, Title I programs are expanding to embrace whole schools and districts.

"When large portions of students in a school are in need, the best way to upgrade the educational experience for those students is to improve the program for the entire student body," August, Hakuta, Pompa, and Fernando Olguin note in *LEP Students and Title I: A Guidebook for Educators* published by Stanford University in November 1995. "Schoolwide programs provide a vehicle for much-needed reform in that regular classroom instruction, rather than supplemental and pull-out instruction, becomes the focus for improving outcomes for students."

Language-minority students stand to benefit from schoolwide Title I programs, August and her colleagues argue, because such students tend to be concentrated in high-poverty schools. But here's where educators encounter a dilemma: how to restructure the whole without short-changing the parts. Traditionally, most U.S. schools have taken one of two tacks: They have banished language-minority students to pull-

out programs or thrown them into the mainstream classroom to sink or swim on their own. The U.S. Department of Education, with backing from the Supreme Court, has judged both approaches—segregation and submersion—illegal. So schools must walk a precarious line between the two extremes. They must blend language-minority students into the overall school program at the same time they attend to those students' special needs.

Some segregation is OK, but only when the benefits to students outweigh the detriments, the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has said. Whatever program the school or district chooses—ESL, transitional bilingual education, developmental bilingual education, or some other strategy or combination of strategies—it must be carried out in the "least segregative manner" possible, Michael Williams, the assistant secretary for civil rights told OCR staff in a 1991 memo. Segregating students for both academic and nonacademic subjects such as recess, PE, art, and music is one practice that could violate antisegregation laws. Another is keeping students in alternative language programs longer than necessary to achieve program goals.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act is the other key piece of legislation that bodes well for language-minority children. Goals 2000 codifies the eight national education goals into law and offers funding to states for systemic reform. The act is specific about which students should reach the high standards set forth in the goals: all of them. It defines "all students" as "students from a broad range of backgrounds and circumstances, including, among others, students or children with limited English proficiency." In explaining how statewide reform efforts will improve schools, states must detail how targeted groups such as disadvantaged students, LEP students, and migrant students will benefit.

"LINKING LEP SERVICES TO BROADER, SYSTEMIC REFORM SHOULD HELP ASSURE THAT THESE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM SUCH REFORM," the U.S. General Accounting Office notes in a 1994 report, *Limited English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts*. Eight U.S. schools featured in a new report from the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education have made this link successfully. In so doing, they have found fertile middle ground between segregation and submersion, where language-minority students can thrive.

"At all of the exemplary schools, the program for LEP students is an integral part of the entire school's restructuring effort," writes Beverly McLeod in *School Reform and Student Diversity: Exemplary Schooling for Language Minority Students* published in 1995. "It is neither conceptually nor physically separate from the rest of the school....The exemplary schools have devised creative ways to both include LEP students centrally in the educational program and meet their needs for language instruction and modified curriculum."

In fact, McLeod notes, at these schools, programs for language-minority students "are so carefully crafted and intertwined with the school's other offerings that it is impossible in many cases to point to 'the LEP program' and describe it apart from the general program.

"At the exemplary schools," McLeod reports, "English language proficiency is not the great dividing line that it is at many schools."

The eight elementary and middle schools described in the report, identified by a nationwide search conducted by the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, "operate on the premise that students are able to participate fully in challenging academic work despite their limited English skills," McLeod writes. The study, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, sought to identify, describe, and analyze exemplary school reform efforts for LEP students in grades four through eight in three curricular areas: language arts, science, and math.

Here's a sampling, in McLeod's words, of effective practices these schools have devised:

- Many of the exemplary schools organize students into larger-than-class groupings such as "families," "houses," "wings," or paired classes. Within these larger units, students can be grouped in various ways for different instructional purposes. For example, each seventh-grade "family" at a middle school might include about 25 LEP students and 60 English-proficient students. The LEP students might be instructed in social studies in a self-contained sheltered or bilingual instructional format, but be integrated with English-proficient students in science classes. These kinds of creative groupings give schools the ability to include all students by sometimes mixing different (language and ability) groups heterogeneously, and sometimes dividing them for instruction geared to their particular needs.
- Teachers guide students into collaborative learning by making extensive use of cooperative work groups. The use of cooperative groups is particularly valuable for LEP students for several reasons. If their group includes a native language mate whose English is more proficient, they can get immediate clarification if they don't understand what is being said. Even if no peer translator is available, LEP students working with other students on a common task are more likely to be able to understand and participate than if they struggled alone to comprehend directions from a teacher or textbook. LEP students in cooperative groups are also given many opportunities for exactly the kind of informal, face-to-face conversation that can strengthen their English skills and their sociolinguistic competence.
- While English acquisition and literacy development are viewed by the exemplary schools as primary goals for LEP students, an equally important objective is engaging in challenging work in other academic disciplines. These schools subscribe to the notion that all students are capable of a high level of serious scholarship, and they offer a rigorous curriculum to all students, regardless of their English language ability. A class of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders at one school uses laptop computers and Hypercard software to produce multimedia book reports. Middle school students at another school conduct scientific investigations of water quality and ant behavior.
- The schools make meaningful connections across academic disci-

Northwest Regional Assistance Center

In keeping with education's new emphasis on systemic reform, integrated services, and integrative curriculum, schools receiving federal dollars to serve special student populations can turn for help to a network of new "megacenters" offering one-stop assistance. The U.S. Department of Education has created 15 regional comprehensive technical assistance centers to provide training and technical assistance encompassing Title I, Indian, migrant, bilingual, and drug education—categories formerly served by separate assistance centers in each region. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, in partnership with the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and Salish-Kootemi Community College, has been designated to operate the center serving the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. The Lab will also assist the center serving Alaska, operated by the South East Regional Resource Center in Juneau. For information, call Director Carlos Sundermann at (503) 275-9479.

Center for National Origin, Race, and Sex Equity

As the federally funded desegregation assistance center for Region X, operated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the equity center assists Northwest schools with preparing and implementing desegregation plans; identifying and promoting awareness of biased and discriminatory actions; eliminating use of biased textbooks and materials; and developing procedures for nondiscriminatory student placement, among other services. Services aimed specifically at improving educational opportunities for language-minority children fall into such categories as language assessment, instructional program development, community support, staff recruitment, parent and student communication, and testing procedures. For information, call Director Joyce Harris at (503) 275-9664.

Office for Civil Rights, Region X, U.S. Department of Education

The Office for Civil Rights investigates allegations of civil rights violations and initiates investigations of compliance with federal civil rights laws in schools. Equity for limited-English-proficient students is a priority area. In response to requests from school districts for help in designing plans for better serving language-minority students, the office has developed an outline of a model plan. The model plan spells out the elements that an alternative language program must include to meet federal guidelines. It also includes a glossary of terms, a policy update, several flow charts, sample home-language surveys, a chart of exit criteria, and an assessment tool, among other materials. For information, call Patricia Yates at the Region X office in Seattle, (206) 220-7924.

State Education Agencies

Under the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, state education departments must help each school and district affected by the state school improvement plan to develop the capacity to comply with school improvement requirements, targeted assistance, and schoolwide requirements. Assistance should include: School Support Teams to provide help to schoolwide programs and, if funds are sufficient, to high-poverty schools or schools in need of improvement; Distinguished Schools that serve as models and provide support to other schools; Distinguished Educators to provide intensive and sustained help to the schools and districts furthest from meeting the state's student performance standards and to schoolwide programs. For information, call the compensatory education specialist at your state education department.

National Resources

- The Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs of the U.S. Department of Education will help states identify appropriate assessment measures for Title I students in languages other than English. For information, call (202) 205-9157.
- The Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, through funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, has developed a school improvement system specifically focused on limited-English-proficient students. To order *Effective Schooling for Second Language Learners: A School Assessment System* by D.L. August and C. Pease-Alvarez, call (202) 429-9292.
- The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education is creating a database of persons who speak a language other than English who are willing to serve as resources to schools. The clearinghouse will be working with comprehensive technical assistance centers to provide this information to schools. For information call (800) 321-NCBE.

plines. Their curricula reflect the kind of integration, depth, and hands-on approaches recommended by educators to guide students into critical thinking and complex understanding.

• Students are encouraged to use language meaningfully. This means allowing them to use their native language to ask or answer questions when they are unable to do so in English.

THE SHIFT IN THINKING THAT SYSTEMIC REFORM REQUIRES is a shift from seeing children's differences as negatives to seeing them as pluses. In current reform lingo, it means moving from a "risk" model to a "resiliency" model. In a 1995 position paper, *Educational Reform and Its Effect on Migrant Education*, Oregon's Migrant Education Service Center points out that the migrant lifestyle, usually viewed as an educational deficit, actually fosters multilingualism, adaptability, cultural understanding, appreciation for the value of work and family, and a sense of responsibility—strengths that schools can and should build on.

The new federally funded Northwest comprehensive technical assistance center operated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory will help schools move from risk to resiliency, from fragmentation to unification, from tracking to inclusion. The center's focus, says Director Carlos Sundermann, will be on "changing the mind-set of school and community collaborators from viewing language- and ethnic-minority students and their families as problems to looking at national heritage, culture, and customs as resources for the further exploration and growth of all children and teachers." ■

Citizens

Continued from page 17

"Almost everything revolves around the hub."

Welcoming parents into the schools and inviting them to take part in their children's education has been a big step toward folding the newcomers into the mainstream of canyon life, White says. "Through ESL and Title I, the school district has played a large role in making the Hispanics feel the community cares about them and is doing something for them," he notes. "For most people, the education of their children is the most important thing. If their children are getting a good education, they won't feel like outcasts in the community."

Maria Martinez is one of the critical points of connection between the schools and Spanish-speaking parents. In her role as bilingual classroom aide, she translates printed information for parents and interprets at parent-teacher conferences. Father-of-four Sergio Sandoval, who was a California farmworker before taking a mill job in the canyon two years ago, found an important ally in Martinez. Sandoval says that when his son was falling behind in class because of health problems or when his daughter failed to get proper recognition for schoolwork she had done, he approached Martinez to bring his concerns to the teachers. "Someone needs to translate," he says. "Someone needs to be the liaison."

The True Value hardware store on Highway 22 is a place where nearly everyone up and down the Santiam Canyon stops sooner or later. Owner Tim Kirsch, who grew up in the canyon, hears a pretty good sampling of community opinions when folks come in shopping for paint or nails.

"You do hear the bigoted slurs now and then," Kirsch admits. "But," he's quick to add, "a lot of it isn't hate-oriented—it's just people talking." He thinks such sentiments are the inevitable growing pains of a community making a rapid transition from uniformity to diversity.

Hispanic families, a rarity in the canyon when Kirsch was in school 20 years ago, now have "a good stronghold in the community," he reports. But he insists that rather than threatening the jobs of locals, as some residents claim, the Spanish-speaking workers are "filling in slack areas" that the local workforce can't or won't fill.

Adds Kirsch wistfully: "I wish I were bilingual. Our client base has a lot of Hispanics."

It's the new reality in the Santiam Canyon, and it's being played out in rural communities everywhere. It's being embraced by people like Arnie White, who's delighted when his five-year-old comes home from kindergarten spouting a new Spanish word. And this expanding multicultural world is being addressed by companies like Freres Lumber, which is collaborating with the community college to enroll its Hispanic millworkers in English classes so they can leave the green chain for more demanding slots.

Like White and Freres Lumber, Tim Kirsch is seeing the future—a future nearly upon us, when commerce and communication cut across cultures, not just in the population centers of Portland and Seattle but in the remotest farmlands and river canyons of the Northwest. ■

Making Contact

Here are phone numbers for some of the key sources quoted in this issue of *Northwest Education*:

David Rosalez
Oregon Distinguished Educator
Ontario (Oregon) Middle School
(541) 889-5377

Merced Flores
Assistant Superintendent
Compensatory Education
Oregon Department of Education
(503) 378-3606, ext. 675

Gloria Muñiz
Specialist
National Origin/Bilingual/
Migrant Education
Oregon Department of Education
(503) 378-3606, ext. 676

Anita Brunner
Consultant
ESL/Bilingual Education
Idaho Department of Education
(208) 334-2195

Patricia Yates
Technical Assistance Coordinator
Office for Civil Rights, Region X
(206) 220-7924

Ron Guyer
Director, Special Education and
Student Services
Ontario (Oregon) School District
(541) 889-8792

Dr. Yolanda Jaini
Director, Complex Instruction
Division of Education and
Psychology
Heritage College
(509) 865-2244

Vivian Ang
Migrant Education Coordinator
Santiam Canyon School District
(503) 897-2009

GIVING PARENTS A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN SCHOOL, making them feel welcome, and keeping them informed are tough enough when all players share the same language and culture. But what if parents speak a different language than school staff? What if getting involved in their child's school would be considered inappropriate meddling in their native country? What if they haven't set foot in a school since third grade and feel fearful and intimidated about approaching teachers or administrators?

These are the linguistic and cultural hurdles that Sunnyside School District recently set out to jump. In the past decade, Hispanic enrollment at this district near Yakima in the heart of Washington's fruit-growing region swelled from less than half to almost three-quarters of total enrollment. With funding from both private and public sources, the district has launched several programs to bring the rising population of Hispanic parents into the schools and into the educational lives of their children.

One project—Parent Effective Leadership Training (PELT), modeled after a program developed for urban Black parents—provides in-home support for literacy development and trains parents in school and community leadership. Through the program's literacy piece, "Backpack Literacy," a school staff member visits homes where young children live, toting in a knapsack a tape recorder and a Spanish-language book in both print and audio versions. An English version of the book is introduced the following week. The idea, says Sunnyside's parent involvement coordinator Sara Vega-Evans, is for parents to read with their kids and for the parent and child to learn language and literacy skills together.

The leadership piece of PELT is a six-week training program conducted in the parents' language that covers leadership skills; avenues for parental involvement in school; stages of child development; communication differences between U.S. and Latin cultures; the structure and chain of command in the U.S. educational system; and goal setting. To graduate from the program, parents must finish all six weeks of training, plus attend a school board meeting and spend at least an hour volunteering in the schools.

About 1,000 parents have taken part in the program since it began three years ago, and 75 parents have graduated and received a certificate of completion—a big boost for the self-esteem of these parents, many of whom have only a third-grade education or less, says Vega-Evans.

"Before PELT, we had a heck of a time getting parents involved in the schools," she notes. "They would say, 'But I don't speak English. How can I be involved?' Now there are no more excuses."

One big barrier is the cultural difference between U.S. and Latin countries with regard to parents' proper role in formal education. "Once we send the child to school, the teacher becomes the father, the mother, the counselor, and everything else," says Vega-Evans of attitudes in her native El Salvador. PELT shows Hispanic parents that not only are they welcome in U.S. schools, but they also can be an important role model and helper for their child.

THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF SPIN-OFF BENEFITS, Vega-Evans says. The training has given many parents the confidence to go back to school and take GED and ESL classes. Some are taking free computer classes at the district. A parent support group to discuss personal issues has grown out of the training program. And several program graduates have been recruited for various advisory groups, including the state-level parent advisory council.

The state education department, which funded the PELT program through a state Readiness-to-Learn grant, is considering the project as a model for statewide implementation, says Vega-Evans, who is writing a training manual for facilitators.

ANOTHER INNOVATION IN THE SUNNYSIDE DISTRICT came out of Washington Elementary School, a K-2 school whose Hispanic enrollment is approaching 80 percent. Supported by a project of the Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development called EMPIRE (Exemplary Multicultural Practices in Rural Schools), the school created a bilingual handbook that cuts across linguistic and cultural barriers to include and inform Spanish-speaking parents. Goals of the parent handbook are several:

- To demonstrate the school's commitment to reach out and involve all parents and community members
- To raise awareness among school staff of the need for a multicultural perspective
- To show the school's desire to adapt to the changing needs of the community
- To communicate to all parents the school's belief that learning continues at home

The Guia Escolar Para Padres (Parent Handbook)—printed on hot pink, purple, and teal paper—contains information on attendance policies, open-house dates, testing, report cards, special programs, PTA meetings, safety procedures, supplies, and other school-related topics. Also included are tips on how parents can help their children succeed in school.

"Many of our children are the children of settled migrants," notes Assistant Principal Diann Zavala. "More and more, our parents are coming in speaking only Spanish. For many of them, it's the first time they've been involved in the U.S. school system. We needed some form of communication—something to hand parents that would serve as a guide to the school."

The district's middle school and another elementary school have developed bilingual handbooks, too, and the district has produced a bilingual school calendar. The handbooks and calendar, says Zavala, are just one outcome of districtwide multicultural training aimed at getting away from the "tourist approach" to cultural awareness and moving instead toward deeper understanding, interaction, and communication.

Meeting the needs of Hispanic parents is, in turn, just one facet of a larger five-year districtwide strategic improvement plan, now in its fourth year.

Although Sunnyside is no longer participating in the EMPIRE project, 10 other Yakima Valley schools, along with Heritage College in Toppenish (see Page 29), are involved in the project. Originally funded by the Ford Foundation, the project is now jointly funded by Heritage and participating schools. For more information, contact Bertha Ortega, Assistant Vice President for Community Relations at Heritage College, (509) 865-2244.

For further information on Sunnyside School District's programs for involving Hispanic parents, contact Sara Vega-Evans at (509) 837-0554.

—Lee Sherman Caudell

NORTHWEST EDUCATION

Quarterly magazine of the
Northwest Regional
Educational Laboratory

Executive Director:
Dr. Ethel Simon-McWilliams

Co-Editors:
Lee Sherman Caudell
Tony Knedek

Issue Editor:
Lee Sherman Caudell

Desktop Publishing:
Denise Crabtree

Graphic Design:
Dan Stephens

NORTHWEST EDUCATION
can be accessed on
NWREL's Web and Gopher sites on the Internet.

Web site: http://www.nwrel.org
Telnet://www.nwrel.org
login: lynx, password: lynx
From our home page, select newsletter

Gopher site: gopher://gopher.nwrel.org
Telnet://gopher.nwrel.org
login: gopher
From our main menu, select
"NWREL News, Events, and Publications"

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the U.S. Department of Education under Contract Number RP91002001. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the department of any other agency of the U.S. government. This publication was not printed with government funds. Articles and information in this publication are in the public domain and may be reproduced and disseminated without permission. Please acknowledge NWREL as the source.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

NWREL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jacob Block (Chairman)
Superintendent
Polson Public Schools (Montana)

Allen Glenn (Vice Chairman)
Dean
College of Education
University of Washington

Dr. Trudy Anderson
Administrator
Idaho Division of Vocational Education

Dr. John Antonen
Executive Director
South East Regional Resource Center
Juneau (Alaska)

Gus Araujo
Managing Director
Source Services Corporation (Oregon)

Dr. George Benson
Consultant/Facilitator
School Leaders Search and Services (Oregon)

Sara Bentley
President/Publisher
Statesman Journal (Oregon)

Dr. Mike Bernazzani
Superintendent
Educational Service District No. 105
Yakima (Washington)

Dr. Judith Billings
Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Bob Burns
Representative for Oregon Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Marcia Christian
Teacher
Battle Ground School District (Washington)

Mike Clements
Chief Operating Officer
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (Oregon)

Mardene Collins
Teacher
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
(Alaska)

Nancy Dees
Puyallup School Board (Washington)

Marilynne Eichinger
Informal Education Products, Inc.
Portland (Oregon)

Dr. Robert Everhart
Dean
School of Education
Portland State University (Oregon)

Dr. Anne Fox
Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction

Bill Fromhold
Vice President
SeaFirst Bank (Washington)

Dr. N. Dale Gentry
Dean
College of Education
University of Idaho

Kathleen Harrington
Director, Day Care Center
Helena (Montana)

Diana Herschbach
School Board Member
Wasilla (Alaska)

Lucious Hicks
Board Member
Portland Public Schools (Oregon)

Dr. Shirley Holloway
Commissioner of Education
Alaska Department of Education

Thelma Jackson
Nat Jackson & Associates, Inc.
Olympia (Washington)

Spike Jorgensen
Educational Consultant
Harold Webb Associates
Tok (Alaska)

Nancy Keenan
Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction

Laurie Lamson (Secretary-Treasurer)
Business Manager
Montana Job Training Partnership, Inc.

Dr. David Peck
Superintendent
Pocatello School District (Idaho)

Dr. Nancy Ruth Peterson
Chairperson
English Department
Moscow School District (Idaho)

Camille Preus-Braly
Director
Office of Educational Policy and Planning
(Oregon)

Dr. Dennis Ray
Director
Washington State Center for
Educational Partnerships

Christopher Read
Teacher
Billings Catholic Schools (Montana)

Dr. Donald Robson
Dean
School of Education
University of Montana

Joan Schmidt
Owner
Schmidt Family Farms
Fairfield (Montana)

Thomas Smith
Chief Operating Officer
United Refrigerated Services, Inc.
Boise (Idaho)

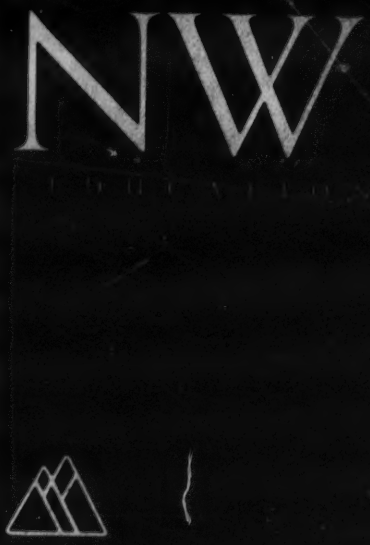
Bonnie Speare
Special Education Teacher
Billings School District (Montana)

Dr. Nikki Squire
Superintendent
Hillsboro School Districts No. 1J and 7 (Oregon)

Linda Vaughey
School Trustee
Havre School District (Montana)

Christine Wada
National School Board Association Director
Pingree (Idaho)

Robert Walp
Vice Chairman
General Communication, Inc. (Alaska)



NORTHWEST EDUCATION
Quarterly magazine of the
Northwest Regional
Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204

Watch for upcoming issues

Spring issue
Making Middle Schools More Effective and Responsive

Summer issue
Assessing Student Performance in the Classroom

Fall issue
Early Elementary Education:
Providing a Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Learning Environment

You are invited to send us article ideas,
identify places where good things are happening,
provide descriptions of effective techniques being used,
suggest useful resources, and submit letters to the editor.

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OREGON
PERMIT NO. 250